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THE MAN WHO MISSED THE SIGNIFICANCE

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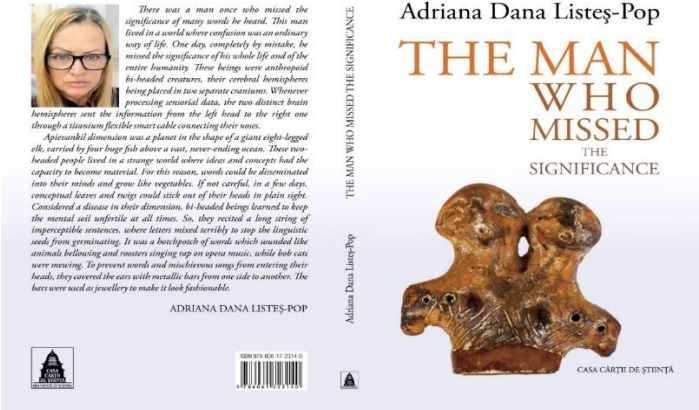
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2020: *Ulpila*, historical novel, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House.

2021: *Murthug the Wanderer (Murthug Rătăcitorul)*, historical novel, volume I, Romanian language, Casa Cărții de Știință, Publishing House.

2022: *The Incredible World in a Dead Man's Skull*, fantastic urmuzian stories, English Language, Casa Cărții de Știință, Publishing House.

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*For Lucian B., who understands everything,
and for Beca L., who will understand later.
It's all crystal clear!*

CONTENTS:

THE MAN WHO MISSED THE SIGNIFICANCE.....	9
SUMNILI	21
BLOODY CORNER	28
CARTON PLANTATION	30
COUP D'ETAT IN OLYMPUS.....	35
GIRMITA	47
A UNICORN IS ALWAYS WHITE.....	51
OLDOWAN	55
HIJACKERS OF THE E-MOONS SYSTEM	58
HUAYNA CAPAC LISTENER TO ALL PEOPLES	67
DOBITO ERGO SUM	70
MONTESCUIEU SECON DAT	74
CMB MAGNETRON	79
I BOOX.....	84
AHPE TZUIC PALINCA AND TOPAIN KA	86
MACAR PHANTOM THUMB LA	90
HORROR VACUI	92
MANY WORLD INTERPRETATION MULTIVERSE MWIM	96
BIG BROTHER.....	99
A CAT, A DOG AND AN ELEPHANT	102
A PHANTOM ATTACKS A WOMAN	105
SOUPREME LEADER BURTOS 0.MU2.15	107

THE MAN WHO MISSED THE SIGNIFICANCE

There was a man once who missed the significance of many words he heard. This man lived in a world where confusion was an ordinary way of life. One day, completely by mistake, he missed the significance of his whole life and of the entire humanity. These beings were anthropoid bi-headed creatures, their cerebral hemispheres being placed in two separate craniums. Whenever processing sensorial data, the two distinct brain hemispheres sent the information from the left head to the right one through a titanium flexible smart cable connecting their noses.

Apievankil dimension was a planet in the shape of a giant eight-legged elk, carried by four huge fish above a vast, never-ending ocean. These two-headed people lived in a strange world where ideas and concepts had the capacity to become material. For this reason, words could be disseminated into their minds and grow like vegetables. If not careful, in a few days, conceptual leaves and twigs could stick out of their heads in plain sight. Considered a disease in their dimension, bi-headed beings learned to keep the mental soil unfertile at all times. So, they recited a long string of imperceptible sentences, where letters mixed terribly to stop the linguistic seeds from germinating. It was a hotchpotch of words which sounded like animals bellowing and roosters singing rap on opera music, while bob cats were mewling. To prevent words and mischievous songs from entering their heads, they covered the ears with metallic bars from one side to another. The bars were used as jewelry to make it look

more fashionable. The rich ones afforded golden and silver ones, while the poor were usually left to cover with whatever they could. Most of the poor folks were wearing conceptual vegetation on their left head, resembling huge intricate stag antlers of multiple colours and sizes. All this process of evading words trying to vegetate in their minds was exhausting, and they couldn't focus on anything else. This is why they were endowed with two heads, in the first place. The other head was occupied with thoughts about females. Whenever they saw an attractive woman, they instantly fell in love and cherished to be with that female, no matter who she might have been. Due to this uncontrollable habit, many wars broke out during their tumultuous history, decimating the population. For that reason, a new religion was created, to avoid making the same mistakes. From that moment on, the males went fishing more than usually, and statues of the primordial monkeys were moved from facing the sun to facing the river. They worshipped Alum Anun, the Bull of Heaven.

Being bi-headed, everything came in double there – two states, two Parliaments, two armies. The respective states were formed of Conselas and Ambulas. Conselas had many females crammed in the same house. They kept them foot-tied and were not allowed to step outside the courtyard, usually circled by thick walls. If they dared to go outside, the weight attached to their foot-chain was so heavy, that they would get tired after a few steps and fall down to the ground randomly, sleeping. The husband didn't want his women to know there were other males around. Females were usually brought up at home, separated from possible brothers, not to acknowledge male existence.

Young boys were banished into the woods to avoid rivalling the Methuselah-like wise ones. Every one in ten babies was castrated, according to immemorial religious rules. For every crime, the punishment for young males was castration. Whispering into the ear of a well-respected patriarch to cause growth of conceptual vegetation was a crime punishable with castration. The same was for getting out of the woods before 18 years old. Showing yourself to a woman or a girl meant castration, and sometimes death. Even their own fathers, the Conselas, were hiding behind a huge hat ornate with metallic spikes, not to be seen by their daughters.

When asked for by a male, no matter the age – the older the better – but compulsorily rich and socially imposing, she was given away without second thought. It was a complicated marital ritual she had to go through, being obliged to sleep with a dead body for a night, in complete darkness. A few hours after midnight, when screaming hysterically, she was taken away by her groom, acting as her saviour, finally taking her to his property. There, she entered a house filled with women of various ages and psychosis stages. Finally, she was brought back to life, light and endless joy. In the house, the lights were never off. In time, by some secret magic, most of the women were transformed into pieces of furniture or artwork by the Great Shaman. Curiously, they still had the ability to feel, but not to think. Females able to think were abomination and girls were kept isolated from letters and drawings, to stay attractive for men. These women could procreate only when they felt no love, but fear and terror. Magic was used to make them procreate continuously.

Ambulas had young women as wives, who inexplicably succeeded to remain forever young and virginal, while bearing lots of children. Ambulas adored their wives, but used to sneak out to meet others, without their spouses' knowledge. Then they came back remorseful, crawling, crying, kneeling, and complaining of being tempted by the devil they could not oppose the least. A few males preferred to live alone, praying to their god, while others raided the houses of Conselas dressed as females, to have fun with the captives. Conselas never found out about it, busy to identify new young, innocent females to bring into their houses. They didn't really care about the others, but their religion did not allow them to set a woman free after touching her. According to their God's instructions, the women Conselas touched and deserted were declared infected by a parasite, so they were obliged to weep for him as if the husband was dead and buried, although he wasn't. If not complying with this rule, their wizard turned them into artwork - if beautiful, or furniture – if not.

They were terrified that Bombogor, also called Dulaer Bomuboguoer, the Great Shaman, who held their souls tied to multiple ropes, one for each soul, could let go their personal rope, dropping the soul into the endless pit of death. Surely they wept, not for the patriarch husbands, but for their secret lovers they wanted to escape with. These occasional lovers had no intention to help them escape other than sexually. It was easier for them and most convenient to have lots of women at their disposal, fed and housed by others, they could choose from and not pay a dime. The only thing they had to do was to pose as dames, wearing long hair, make up, jewellery, bras, dresses and skirts. It was completely in their advantage in that world that males had no facial hair, while females had plenty. Sometimes, these males married patriarchs as women, to have permanent access to the

desperate females within. Nobody really cared, as love was not important there. Those who could fall in love and nurture feelings for others were officially registered mentally ill.

There was no place for love in that world and children had to be procreated rationally, staying awake night and day, dancing in front of the oven while mixing egg whites and yolks separately, poured in sweetened milk, boiled gently, listening to screams and cries on the national radio. These females were trained to reach unusual high stages in sexual frustration and sadness. If happiness couldn't be measured in kilos, cut into pieces and sold at the market for coins, then it certainly did not exist, so it was massively ignored. Everything not material was neglected, as its existence was not possible to be proven. Whoever affirmed the existence of invisible things was immediately taken to the state hospice for lunatics, where they were allowed to discuss, debate and write whatever they pleased. As soon as they died, everything was burned, together with their dead body, which wasn't given the honour of being put to sleep with a young virgin, thus not given the chance to be possibly brought back to life, as it happened with their God in immemorial times.

The same with love – if not visible, material, to be cut into pieces and sold at the market for gold or silver bars, then it certainly did not exist and to admit its existence would be madness. If the women showed clear signs of dislike or dissatisfaction as if they lacked something, they were tickled on their soles with feathers by state officials, till they fainted and never dared to show it again in plain sight. To motivate them stay contented with less than imaginable, the state offered them little shiny stars they could pin to their clothes, to brag about.

All the women were bright and incredibly shiny. They looked like knights in armour, ready to fight the battle for glory. In addition, they were persuaded to spy on other women and report to a state official hidden in a secret closet in each household. The state representative was disguised in a dustpan with a broom attached, not to look suspicious. The only invisible existence accepted as real was their God, a stone giant, reigning over the mountains. The God was considered real, material, just because he was found there by the ancestors and, since then, he did not vanish, remaining physical to guard his people. He had a huge nose to instill fear into the unfaithful ones. Alum Anun, the Bull of Heaven, was served by an army of young males banished into the wilderness. His wife, the Goddess of the Mountain, took care of all those wretched souls, feeding and washing them regularly.

One day, one of the boys who was banished into the woods found a deserted woman. His name was Zephyr Aris. The woman was left there by the Conselas because she was infected with a parasite nobody knew about. Fearing for their lives, they set her free, hoping a wild animal would eat her immediately. Aris fell instantly in love with Evanka, the woman. But he didn't know how to express his love, so he just stood there, looking at her with huge, bulgy eyes. Then suddenly he threw himself at her and raped her in great frenzy. Since then, Evanka was his woman, unity sanctified by the act of wild possession. All the other boys wanted to rape her, so Aris took Evanka and ran away in a different part of the huge, wild, millennial forest spread over those lands. He staged their death first, leaving bits of clothes and hulks of meat on the ground, and a dead, bloated tiger behind them. It was as if the tiger had eaten them, dying of indigestion afterwards. Arriving on the other side of the woods, the couple realized it was colder there.

They lived there happily ever after, the woman washing the clothes, cooking and cleaning, while the boy was hunting wild poultry with a bow. He missed most of the game, but he could rely on plenty of fish in the river. One day, a snake showed himself out of nowhere and befriended the boy, gaining his trust. Then, slowly, he started to undermine his confidence in the woman. Finally, he told him the women are never to be trusted because they usually have a treacherous nature. The boy began to feel hate for the woman and respect for the snake. Then, the snake said he is obliged to leave, never to return there, but he would give the boy a valuable present he should guard with his own life.

– Never show the book to the woman, never! Keep it buried in the ground till the children of your children will find it, and know what to do with it. This book is a gift from my God, he personally instructed me to bring it here.

Saying this, the snake disappeared. The boy remained there dumbstruck, regretting to be left godless and friendless, with a treacherous woman near him. Since that day, the boy hated the woman terribly, and for that reason he beat her whenever she dared to talk to him. He worshipped the ground where he buried the book, building an altar right on that spot. Seeing the boy had changed, the woman lost her voice during night time and went fat.

– You are so fat and ugly. Get away from my sight! he screamed, hitting her.

– What? I am not fat. You are body-shaming me and that's illegal. My body is not for your pleasure, but to serve the state, properly and patriotically. My purpose is reproduction.

– The snake told me you would work for me and make me rich. But since I brought you here, I am poorer and poorer.

– I can't work during my bleeding period. Can't you see I am dying?

– Stay away from me with your devilish parasites and diseases, or I kill you, roared the boy, preoccupied with the fact that he had less hair than usual on his head. Did he catch some sort of disease from the treacherous woman? Was he about to die because of her?

Evanka cried and hid herself within the hut and never came out again. Zephyr Aris took advantage of the situation and enclosed her within high walls, to prevent the others from getting inside to see her. The boy was happy hunting again with his friends and went to the woman in the night, when he couldn't see her properly. He was quite satisfied that she was trapped inside, without the possibility to go out into the dangerous world as he was doing anything possible to shelter and protect her. His biggest concern and worry tormenting him each night was that other men could reach her and touch her without him knowing it. With each torturous night passing by, he hated her even more. To ease the pain, he imagined she is not real, but only a bad dream. Going back to his gang, he told them about his regular nightmares with a fat and ugly woman, hiding behind a wall. Nobody paid attention to him, but a tall, blonde, skinny teenager and a ginger dumb child.

After a few months, a younger boy happened to pass by the hut. It was the blonde skinny, tall boy, quite simple minded, but really curious to find out about the fat, ugly woman in the nightmares. For a couple of days, he walked around the high walls, moving in circles, whistling. The woman answered singing a lullaby. Hearing the voice of a female, he took a tool and hit one side of the wall continuously, till a hole big enough to get through was produced. Then he stepped inside and, charmed by

her appearance, called her beautiful and desirable. Unable to resist, the woman fell into his arms. Then the boy repaired the wall and went away, coming back in the daytime, whenever he had the chance. Londu, because that was his name, kept his escapades secret.

Soon afterwards, the woman had a child. The child had blonde hair just like the younger boy Londu, and Zephyr Aris was terribly surprised. Where did that sleeping little creature come from?

– What is this?

– This is my cub.

– Where did it come from?

– I found it by my side, last night. It was hiding inside my body, tied to me by a string.

– In your big belly? But how did it get there? Who put it inside?

– I don't know. Now go away because I need to sleep, I am exhausted.

Aris had no idea another man was visiting the one he considered his own, personal woman. Seeing the woman grows a huge belly, young Londu got scared thinking the woman is suffering from a horrible disease. She was gradually growing inflated in the way the frogs did, when he was pumping air into them with his mouth, using a straw. So, he disappeared not to catch the disease, get swollen and die like a dumb frog. After some years, another boy came, Roshka, the one with ginger hair, and the woman had a ginger child. Zephyr Aris was terribly surprised again, but he wanted more sons to help him hunt wild animals.

- Why don't you make more? I need help around.
- I do what I can. You make one for yourself, if you want
- They don't like to hide in my belly, it's beyond me why.
- They just don't like you. Anyway, the more we are, the more food we need. Don't you see?
- I don't get it. Are you cursed? They will eat less, that's all.

– Go away, I am tired.

Zephyr Aris was now the head of a small tribe, bossing around two strong sons able to help him hunt, especially when old and feeble. He was dictatorial with his boys and ruthless with their mother. He beat her more often, ordering her to make more sons to work hard for him. But the woman couldn't do anything about it, no more vagrant teenagers were roaming around. On the death bed, Zephyr Aris remembered what the Wise Snake gave him and informed his sons about the altar and what's underground. Then, he said he is in the position to choose the heir, so the two sons, Papsukkal and Gula, were to enter a competition for his favours. The old man's most ardent wish was to eat a portion of good food and gain force, right before going to the other world. Both sons ran around hunting and cooking for him, dreaming to be the only heir and take it all, leaving the other brother in complete poverty and misery. The elder one, the blonde son, cooked a vegetable broth for his father, using all the flavoured vegetables grown in his own garden.

The other one, the ginger son, stabbed a yeonling and cooked a delicious stew. He wondered why the meat exploded when he put it in the pot above the open fire, but he soon forgot

about it. Maybe it was a sign that he was the true heir. Mumbling a long, unperceivable prayer, he took the meal to his father. The old senile parent took a sip of the broth and pushed it away. Then he grabbed the stew pot and began to gnaw a bone, smacking his lips.

– I choose you, he uttered, looking at the bone with kind affection in his eyes.

He was completely gone in the head. Still, his sons listened to his every word, worshipping their father, usually sitting bent in front of him in humble positions, kissing his hand. The father was wise and he knew better. Happily chewing the bone while watching a young goat passing on the foot path, the father told them the great secret – never tell your women about the book, they must never know and never read it, or they might die in agony. Saying this, he gave his last breath and died, goggle-eyed as if seeing a ghost.

The ginger son assumed that he is the heir according to the pattern of inheritance, due to the pleasure his father showed when chewing his bone. Heartbroken, the blonde son vanished next day, tying himself with chains in a cave, watching shades propagated by a burning fire on the back wall. Depressed over being ignored by his father, brother and mother, he felt there is no purpose in life, other than contemplating the flickering light and the moving shadows. His brother peeped on him and when he saw him inside, heavily chained, blocked the entrance with a huge boulder, trapping his older brother within. Joyful and without the slightest remorse, he took everything his father and brother had, and began to reign like a true patriarch. He took lots of young wives for himself and procreated children obliged to work the land and tend the flocks of animals for him. “Now this is life”, he thought to himself, self-contented with his

success. Suddenly, a huge bang could be heard nearby and a ball of fire hit him in the right temple. He fell to the ground soundless. Immediately, his children began to fight for the properties, animals and females, killing each other. Only those who ran away with little they could lay their hands on survived the massacre. There they were, poor again, but happy to be alive and able to work hard, be it day or night, ice-cold winter or scorching summer.

SUMNILI

Sumnili was a faraway place where, since time immemorial, some of the Ambulas perpetrators were sent to expiate their crimes in a kind of a sleeping trance. Lately, their gravest sin was to wish to reverse to the initial innocence of humankind, when walking on four legs was a true blessing. That meant to get back to a tetragram-like position, to imitate the ancestors, the primeval monkeys. Most of the Ambulas considered it a regress, while the group of Sumnilis had a collective nostalgia for the benefits of the primordial ape lifestyle. Her name was Ardi, and she was worshipped as the true mother of the Sumnili mankind.

The quadrupeds wanted *to return to the primitive purity* because *God was operating through nature*. In other words, they were in search of that specific *native easiness*, to break with the present and return to the revered past. Practically, they preferred to walk like quadrupeds do, whenever they felt like, and they really enjoyed it. They mostly liked to admire the dorsal side of the females, especially Gluteus Maximus, instead of reaching for the sky light.

Obviously, using more than two feet for locomotion was a fatal error that could endanger the whole species. Accused of black magic and venerating a deceiving demon, all the confused four-legged walkers of the Ambulas were arrested and sent to Sumnili. Scientists, linguists, historians, philosophers and politicians, all got together in a national crises conference,

debating what could be done to stop the spreading of the fake belief, bewildering the minds of the vulnerable Ambulas. *Evangelienbuch* and *Novum Organum* books of the Wise Elders' Club were published and handed freely to each member of the society to give consent. Life insurance affair was invented to make people believe their lives were safe, but the money collected this way were secretly used to finance wars against illusionary enemies.

Novum Organum was written based on the ancient scripts found in a Cretacic cave. Because the Ambulas did not correctly translate the old sacred writings, the chronological events were pushed a bit further away into the immediate future. All that was supposed to happen to help their civilization evolve was postponed for an indefinite period of time, preserving the ancestral values. It was as if there was a perpetual present, deliberately ignoring the past and the future, considered non reasonable values. The wide majority haven't noticed the temporal values had changed, they thought time was passing slower than usually, due to oscillations in the planet's rotation process around its own body. Generally, they felt time was stalling, to maintain the status quo and prevent the large population from panicking. It was ascertained in their sacred writings that the time does not exist because it is not visible, nor moving. Thus, it was an error to consider time more than a devilish illusion.

Many of their scientists denied the planet was moving, claiming that its corkscrew form inserted into the sun, which looked just like a bottle, made it seemingly moving, but it wasn't. It was the sun that was moving around the Sumnili planet to open its lid and pour its life, letting sunshine out. That happened daily, and the reason why the sun was perceived as round was plainly because their planet was exposed to the bottom of the bottle,

mainly the inside part. The conviction of the scientific elites was that the planetary motion was illusionary, the eternal circular movement of uncorking the bottled sunshine being the cause of this universal law. This breakthrough scientific discovery prompted all the scientists and educated people to drink in celebration, uncorking bottle after bottle, till they fell down unconscious. All males followed their wise example and the greatest virtue there was to drink and honour the sun by being an alcoholic. This was clearly a sign of evolution from the monkey-like position which wasn't able to drink, nor brew beverages on its own.

On Sumnili, there was a genuine phenomenon of collective sleep-living, which means their life happened while they were sleeping in their beds. Their best dream ever was to sit down at the opera house and eat sausages. Many of them dreamed to be rabid dogs chasing psychoanalysts on their bikes, and bite their foot-heels. But to learn to be biped again, they were obliged to sleep up on their feet, in vertical position, perfectly fixed in a metallic box suspended by a thin, smart rope on the ceiling's master beam, the thickest one supporting all the other smaller opposite beams. All the air breathed was filtered through a sophisticated network of cables and masks. The air was genetically modified, sterilized and infused with positive energy. A subliminal cocktail of messages were pumped into their brains during REM, codes like "step by step", "in two steps", "biped walking is the best", "better biped than quadruped", "a small step for a man, a huge leap for mankind" were constantly bombarding their subconscious.

In those times, the uttering of number four was illicit. One evening, the thread one man was hanging by, accidentally broke. In that fatal moment, the man fell on his head and fractured his right sole. The pain was excruciating, causing him to limp in

various degrees in his next 360 dreams. That prompted a tendency for more confusion and ambiguity to install in his mental capacity. The incident happened on the 24th of July, though it might have been 25th.

Since then, Bangamlota, the fallen one, got an obsessive compulsion to secretly plant weed seeds everywhere. All this happened while sleeping, of course. Subjected to some sort of magic scientific experiment, these people could only survive in a sleeping environment like fish in water, or die otherwise. Sleep for them was like oxygen for humans. So, in his dreams, Bangamlota used to regularly sneak out and dig a hole, on the sly, tiptoeing, put the seed in, then cover it and disappear afterwards in great haste, trying hard not to be observed. Of course, he was not the only one acting this way, but all of them refused to acknowledge it, even when they were back to back with each other, because there were times when it was really crowded there. Generally, all males had this habit, but they vehemently denied it on each occasion they were questioned, in loud voice or in silence.

Soon, there were wild bushes everywhere, appeared randomly and entirely out of the blue. Sometimes, Bangamlota planted wild flowers, just like some of the others did, whenever a convenient situation arose. Nevertheless, stray dogs, drunkards, homeless vagrants found a place of hiding there, making a terrible noise and dirt. It was their heaven, a colony of hopelessly lost souls, the new lepers of the last stage of that civilization's continuous evolution towards infinite progress, avoiding the infinite regress, at all costs. For this particular reason, they never walked backwards and anyone who dared to do so was severely punished. More than that, it was completely forbidden to turn your head and look back. Cohorts of police men were entrusted with the patriotic responsibility to watch and report whoever is

defying this state law, issuing fat fines for whoever dared to do it. For the repetitive offenders, special handcuffs were prepared, covered in silky material and white bunny fur, to ease the pain of the females, who mostly preferred to contemplate the world by looking back over their shoulders.

In that place, it was customary to have different handcuffs for each offence. For the most famous offenders, the handcuffs were invisible, that is they were covered in a thin layer of light reflecting metal brought from planet XOrnix, making them invisible to the naked eye and easy to feel on delicate wrists. Actually, they were quite flexible, just like jelly or chewing gum. Usually, these kinds of handcuffs fell by themselves to the ground in a few minutes, disintegrating rapidly. It's clear to see that this type of society had an extremely evolved civilization. For most of the offences committed by common people, the cuffs were made from nickel and titanium, coated in refined copper.

One day, on the breaking news bulletin, it was nationally conveyed that a strange child was found right in the middle of a dandelion bush. Nobody knew who that child was or where did it come from. Did he fall from the sky during the last night's rain? Was it brought by a hawk or by a jackal? Maybe a stork dropped it, a horse or a she-wolf, as it happened in the legendary times of the Roman kingdom, right before becoming a glorious empire. Nobody knew for sure, but the child was taken to a special facility to be tested and see if he was an enemy of that human race, probably a maleficent alien or a malicious demon, possibly a materialization of an anonymously dreamed nightmarish main character.

From that day on, the government decreed that dreams and nightmares should be carefully scrutinized by the state officials. A Minister of the National Dreams was established with a member of the Materialists' Party leading it. His first idea was to

finance the publishing of the study *The Misinterpretation of Dreams* signed by Sreudmund, followed by *The History of Epidemiological Reasoning and Logic*. Advertising repeated in various forms this mental command: “A clever person sleeps in two hours more than a stupid one does in eight hours”.

Then, the materialists attempted to stop the epidemics of dreaming by making people work more nightshifts, cutting the length of compulsory sleep time from eight hours to a couple of hours only, undermining the sleeping process by issuing long series of disturbing vibrations. A secret vibration table was installed under the floor of each bedroom in the country, with *the bed legs mounted directly on the table through holes in the floor*. The vibrator tables were issuing vertical vibrations of 0.34 m/s^2 and horizontal vibrations of 0.24 m/s^2 , lasting approximately two seconds, with a dominant frequency of approximately 12 Hz.

The REM sleep was completely compromised. Sleeping pills were made illegal overnight. Everybody found in possession of sleeping pills was sent to jail for a long time, where the noise was continuously ear-piercing. To monitor the most dangerous nightmares for the national safety, floating satellites were installed above each house. The satellites were shaped like two-legged, long-haired, smiling goats that sang comforting songs, while intercepting reminiscences of last night’s dreams. Following this project, the entire population was obliged to wear the head uncovered. Whoever covered the head with hats, caps, or hoodies was considered an illegalist. No protests were reported whatsoever.

A whole new science exploded, with corporations bribing for contracts with the state. Advertisements and commercials were aired about how to drink more coffee and stay alert: “Sleep less, eat more!”, “Why sleep? You will sleep enough when you will be dead”. “Don’t sleep, stay tuned for our live broadcast!”. It

was better for the government to have the population always tired and dragging feet, like zombies, ready to fall on any chair available, or even fall down and break some limbs, then stay in hospitals closely guarded by medical personnel.

People were found sleeping on the streets, standing up like horses do. This public crime had to stop. Police was sent to pick them up on the streets and carry them to facilities built especially for sleep addicts and sleepwalking maniacs. More hospitals were needed, so the sports arenas and the hotels were transformed into nomad hospitals and care personnel was moved there in special rooms on the superior levels. When the Parliament members were found illegally sleeping in their chairs while audio recordings with them debating were on, the scam was discovered and everybody could go to sound sleep again. *The Sleeping Beauty* most expensive newest remake of the movie became rapidly a global success.

BLOODY CORNER

Ilait Erebeta was eating his breakfast, sitting down at the table in the living room. Suddenly, the two edges of the left wall subtly vibrated. Ilait looked there for a second, his eyesight was unusually blurry in that moment. He felt a pinch on his neck and fainted, his face down in the empty plate. Stabbed by the corner of the wall, Ilait was lying there motionless, bleeding emotional pain and puking anguish, which was pinkish with green granules of fear and despair. When he came back to his senses, he called at work to let them know he cannot go that day, due to the fact that he was viciously attacked by a corner in his living room. They politely thanked him for announcing, but marked him absent-minded. Ilait worked in a zigzagged tall building, near a spiralled international tower hotel, where clients used to entertain by rushing themselves down one curve of the spiral and travel downstairs without taking the elevator. The smart elevators had special sensors and the ability to think for themselves, tuning to each individual's brainwaves. A few of them did not enjoy the elegant intrusion inside their own, private mental inner space. Sometimes, some of the tourists residing in the hotel landed on Ilait Erebeta's company's roof, when the impetus of the jump was too intense.

In that place, all the buildings had to be roundly shaped in order to avoid accidents. Their scientists discovered that sharp shapes can damage their welfare, exactly in the way a knife stabs a fleshy entity. A brand new business and production branch came into being. The profits were astronomical. Everything sharp

was prohibited. Anyone found in possession of a sharp object was detained, interviewed and brainwashed carefully, using a solution made from crushed soap bubbles, stall air extracted from birthday parties' balloons and a concentration of joy emanated after scoring a goal in football games.

CARTON PLANTATION

Wishing to enter the business environment, Caron Pierre Tetrapa bought a carton plantation located close to his summer house. Maybe it was a case of uncaused cause, but in that place carton was growing on plants, just like cotton. If the plants were intelligently enough genetically modified, the cartons could grow into various shapes and sizes, even colours. Caron Pierre Tetrapa could only afford a simple plantation producing just old-fashioned square-shaped carton boxes. To work the land, he first used the hoe inherited from his grandfather. Seeing its effectiveness, Caron preserved the hoe and exposed it on the wall of fame, to boast about his success in the future. After harvesting, he collected enough profit to invest into new, advanced, cutting edge technology and forgot about the hoe, still located on the honorary wall of the company. In short time, his company was listed on several online stock-exchanges.

Attractive enough, it caught the eye of an investment corporation, which relisted Caron Pierre Tetrapa Limited on its own channels. So, it became part of a vast, intricate network of companies managed by Invest.Org.Corp multinational-corporation, with offices all over the world. His success was almost trivial. He bought expensive automobiles for collection, ancient paintings, Palaeolithic statues, even a cave containing two million years old fossils in Africa. He wasn't interested in history, archaeology or arts at all, but he hoped to bribe government officials and hire thirteen years old boys to secretly mine for diamonds. He was finally an accomplished man. The entire world belonged to him.

The feeling was grand, no matter it could only last for the period he was alive and conscious.

One morning, he unexplainably woke up sad and depressed. Caron took one of the 1920's car for a ride, and went directly to the cave. He sat down on a boulder, thinking in the darkness. The businessman took an almost complete skull in his hand and looked at it, attentively. Should he ask the same question "to be or not to be?" or should he keep his mouth shut? He wasn't sure what to do, but looking at the naked skull, he realized life is too good for him to be so short. An idea nested in his brain, idea which quickly became an obsession. His sadness was caused not by the fact that life is hard, but by the shortness of it. Life was good for him. He needed more chronological capital to invest into his own successful business story, which, as a matter of fact, equaled his life. Business was his life and his life was business. Caron needed more of everything and couldn't accept the idea that's the way things are for the poor and for the rich, for the noble or common people. Accustomed to buying anything, he wanted to buy more time, to extend his individual life.

He told his secretary to find a solution and come to him in the next couple of hours. A guru arrived on the premises to give advice on the matter. They talked in privacy in Pierre's office for some time. Next days, Invest.Org.Corp's employees saw Pope's right hand, a witch on a smart broom, a tall bald Dutch surgeon and even Dalai Lama's main assistant. Still not satisfied with his enquires, Caron Pierre Tetrappa requested something else. The Dutch surgeon asked for generous donations, the witch wanted a whole flotilla of brand new, smart brooms with nuclear buttons. The guru told him to become a vegetarian and contemplate the world in the lotus position. Pope's and Dalai Lama's right hands conveyed to him to

renounce his wealth and fortune and enter a catholic or Buddhist monastery, where by praying, fasting and meditating could reach eternal life in paradise or Nirvana. Caron Pierre couldn't make up his mind to choose between Christian Paradise and the Buddhist Nirvana. The real issue was giving up his hardly acquired wealth. It was impossible for him to even imagine himself being poor again, having to work for others and be under an army of superior, inferior and middle management corporate mercenaries. Most of them were ruthless, greedy, equipped with an acute level of killer instinct. Plus, Caron Pierre wasn't the type to kiss the bottoms of an endless hierarchy of superior managers, in order to maintain his job and monthly wages.

Confused and disappointed, Caron Pierre Tetrapi had no idea what else he could do to prolong his life over 80-90 or 100 years that was currently offered to each human being, if lucky. He asked his driver to take him to the central park to walk in harmony with the trees, and think it over. While walking slowly, his head down, crushed under the implacable shortness of human life span, he stepped on something. It was a rocky bar, similar to a thin brick, but different. A man coughed, catching his eye. It was dressed in a long, purple tunic and his complexion was burnt by sunshine.

– Dear Sir, I have something which might interest you, the man said, showing him a piece of the same stuff he accidentally stepped on.

– What is this?

- This is material time.
- Are you pulling my leg? Time is not material.
- Time, space and reality are all relative, sir.
- I know that, but definitely not material.
- Everything is relative, material or not.
- I don't understand.
- Is space material?
- Yes, it surely is.
- Is reality material?
- Of course.
- Then why wouldn't the time be material, a material we are not able to perceive?
- Because it's impossible. *Show me what stuff time is made of.*
- This is the stuff time is made of. Just feel it with your hands.

Caron Pierre Tetrappa took the material time bar into his hands, turning it on all sides. It seemed to have been made of clay, but not quite. It was as light as a feather and somehow, when looking closer, his fingers seemed to penetrate it, slightly going into its texture. He looked at the strange man in wonder and amazement.

- Put it on your forehead.

Caron Pierre put it on his forehead, as if mesmerized. He felt warmth entering his skin and frontal bone. This made him feel calm and balanced in his mental substance, and all his sadness disappeared.

- I can pay gold for this, Caron said, happily.

But the man vanished into the thin air, leaving behind a chipped, purple pottery jug. Terribly surprised, the businessman took the jug and went back to his car. Next day, a prodigy child stepped into his office. Pierre was looking at the child,

speechless, pondering. What was he doing there? The pottery was on the top shelf of his library, its shade falling equally in four sides. The young boy was playing with a pair of metallic spheres, rolling them in his small hands, looking out of the window. In a moment, Pierre understood everything. He had to be a child again, so what he needed to do was to finance a medical research lab specialized in regressing the age of mature people. He is still financing it.

COUP D'ETAT IN OLYMPUS

Blaming it on Ismene, Oedipus went mad one day, took all his clothes off and started butchering insignificant people, mostly slaves with no human rights to existence. Soaked in blood and still possessed by a legion of ancient demons, he ran away, yelling. He arrived at the Oracle of Delphi, where Pythia whispered to him that his father was the king of Thebes. Tormented by the fact that he was deserted by his biological father when he was a baby, he wanted to do something completely shocking. Thus, instead of killing his father to be able to sleep with his mother, he performed the actions the other way around.

Bluntly put, gone in the head, but pressed to respect the multiple gender law, Oedipus killed his mother and raped his father. This was scandalous and outraging. Suddenly, all the psychological complexes and normal foundations of the human mind were turned upside down. From that moment on, Narcissus never stopped admiring his own image and married his cousin, young and handsome Homo Sapiens Idaltu. Following the same trend, Hercules killed his wife and all the children and married Homo Sapiens Heidelbergensis. Being an acclaimed hero, he wasn't punished in his native polis, but only in the afterlife, where his dead wife and children kept asking for revenge and reasonable explanations, not for reliable proof. Nobody could have been as cruel as their father; still not a soul cared about them.

Seeing all the chaos that erupted in the mortal world, Hermes brought the news to Olympus. He was spying on humans, while hiding within an enslaved little girl's body. Almost ripped into pieces by Oedipus, Hermes woke up and quickly dispossessed the little girl's body. Gods began to be worried. They knew humans weren't too smart or virtuous, but to go against the natural laws of the mortals was a terrible hubris. When bored, gods were watching what's happening on Earth and they saw that humans were, as always, obsessed with reproduction and killing. That was efficient to keep them occupied and away from the realm of the gods. Yet, the Olympians had some expectations from the human race, endowed with a spark of reason, accidentally fallen out of Zeus's lightning torch millions of years ago, impregnating the matter of their planet. In all those thousands years, they expected that spark to grow and spread around into the minds of the human generations, even if that wasn't in their best interest.

Curious about what happened to the spark, the gods decided to send forces to rediscover the divine light, see and report on what was happening there.

– I am certain Hercules went mad while doing his labours, said Aphrodite.

– You think so? asked Mars, ironically.

– Nobody likes to labour, it's obvious, she added with a flutter of her long lashes.

– She is right, the rest of the gods murmured in consent.

– It could be, said Athena, but it wasn't the wife and children that forced him into the labours. The gods did it.

– He couldn't kill gods, scoffed Hermes.

– No, of course, but then why impose impossible targets on humans? added Athena.

– You like humans? Look at them, they multiply like bugs.
Kill one and ten others pop up again.

– Exactly. Soon they won't have what to eat, but do they care? Do they think?

– They never learn, not in a billion years.

– The only solution is repetitive erasure. They multiply till they reach the point of extinction and then they start again.

– That's the only way to get rid of them. They don't know better. What if all of us multiplied here continuously, and then our children started to fight each other, blindly? Would that be paradise? All crammed? I don't think so.

– I like my comfort, space and time to be mine, only.

– Maybe humans like it, too.

– No, ha ha ha, humans only waste their time with useless things. Their brains are upside down. For instance, they think they are the masters of the animals, but actually they serve the animals, feeding them and cleaning after them. You see?

– I see. They should spend more time thinking and improving their mental substance.

– Instead, they multiply, fight and kill each other.

– Why can't they be peaceful and collaborate with each other?

– That wouldn't be in our best interest, would it? It's better they exhaust themselves competing – what nation is the most numerous, who is the strongest and so on.

– So, that's why they keep multiplying, each nation trying to be the greatest of them all?

– Of course.

– They are not very bright.

– Quite the contrary.

– What can be done to help them?

– We don't want to really help them, we just pretend. So, we will find somebody able to go there and trace the genuine divine spark of reason fallen from Zeus's lightning into their ancestral biological matter, to bring it back here.

– We think that spark is blocked or maybe it disappeared.

– It should have grown and spread around to each of them, but it seems it got stuck.

– Maybe it was stolen.

– Who wants to go?

– Any lover of the humans? Put your hand up and go volunteering to save humanity. Anybody? asked Zeus looking around.

– Nobody wants to go there. A human being's life is short and hard.

– Then send somebody who likes them.

– Free Prometheus.

– Yeah, send Prometheus, he likes humans.

– He is retarded.

– He's got autism. Don't discriminate, dear colleague. It's not his fault his parents conceived him this way.

– Bring him here, said Zeus.

Prometheus was brought chained in front of Zeus. His chains were rusty, covered in dry blood and dirt. He was almost blind, his back was broken and the palms of his hands were curved. His skin got dark and feeble, like scorched land during drought. Strains of blood were dripping from his liver. He was cast away on a deserted mountain where an eagle was tearing up his inner organs, piece by piece. His torture was eternal, atrocious and the hatred equaled it. Prometheus hated gods and humans alike, nurturing thoughts of horrible vengeance against them all. He tried to control the hatred in front of Zeus, striving to look patient and humble enough not to seek vengeance. Somehow,

they believed it and the chains fell to the marble floor. Prometheus was finally free to go. He took the first step and a voice cried out:

– Wait!

The other foot remained in the air. When he turned his head, god Mars was whispering something into Zeus's left ear.

– Speak up for everybody to hear it, agreed Zeus.

– Dear fellow gods, there is an issue. In order not to be recognized, Prometheus must be sent back on Earth changed.

– Hhhhhmmm, the others murmured. He is right.

– Then make him whiter.

– His skin is too dark, indeed.

– Yeah, and maybe taller.

– Blonde hair would look good.

– Obviously.

– And blue eyed, like us.

– But then they will suspect he is a god.

– You're right.

– What should we do then?

– Make him a woman, said Athena.

– The best idea ever.

Zeus nodded, proud to acknowledge the wisdom of the daughter he himself delivered out of his forehead. All the other gods were whispering in admiration. Nobody could equal her intelligence, that's why they usually gave up before even trying. Mercury was terribly jealous, poisoned with envy. How could he lay his hands on Athena, make her his woman, to love and to serve him without a word of opposition? In an instant, Prometheus was turned into a woman.

– Your name is Prometina and you are bound to go on Earth and serve our purpose among humans, for our strict benefit. You will be brought back when necessary, to report on your sacred, secret mission. No human is to know about it, or else you will be banished in the realm of the shadows, underground, forever.

Prometina left to follow the implacable destiny set by Gods. Unfortunately, she wasn't the kind of submissive girl they needed to obey their orders. She decided to mismatch everything and give back ambiguous information to mislead. Said and done. First, she had to turn upside down all things that connected humans and gods, since the beginning. Where did gods intervene and illegally interfered with human lives?

The War of Troy. What she had to do was to find out what really happened there, how gods manipulated the events for their benefit, and inform mortals about it. Slowly, she found out that Hercules killed all his family in a kind of sacred mania invented by his Olympian father to defend him in front of the Parcae. The defense even dared to state that Hercules was provoked by his nagging wife, who complained about him being always gone, leaving her with hungry children to deal with, alone. Based on the provocation of a female, he was acquitted by the Olympic tribunal. Now it was high time to expose him to humans and ask for his punishment. She also knew that Achilles had fasciitis, Ariadna and Theseus suffered of labyrinthosis, while Oedipus ended up with a binocular blindness.

Besides, there were gruesome murders within legendary families Prometina was going to tell all the world about it, at the right moment. So, she knew that the most beautiful woman in the mortal world lived in Troy and was in love with young Paris. They were walking hand in hand, kissing and enjoying their

love, when a strange metallic bird sat itself on the branch of an olive tree. Next day, Helen's picture was seen by Aga Memnon, the dark-hearted emperor of the neighbouring realm. In Troy, women and girls had the ancestral right to choose the man they liked to marry or have a love story with. In Aga Memnon's kingdom, this was considered blasphemy and the greatest sin against their god Pricumuss, endowed with the biggest stone phallus in the entire mortal world, erected in the Pladur cave, in Padang Parang Palang.

Whenever Pricumuss needed a young virgin maiden to live his fantasies with, she was brought to him chained. This happened daily. For this reason, the metallic black-bird named Wi Du Kina was sent to spy on all beautiful maidens, all over the mortal realm of the humans. Prometina found some friends and started a patriotic movement for freeing the mortal humans from under the yoke of the gods with their heads high up in the clouds.

– Prometina, said Robina Hu Dina, I think it's pronounced Toroy, not Troy.

– It's not Toroy, it's Toryo.

– Cannot be, it makes no sense.

– Then we keep calling it Troy till we find out more about it.

– Maybe it's better to pronounce it Tro or Toroy, to mislead curious ears who might report it high up.

– Toroy it will be then.

Sent by Pricumuss to bring Helen for his cave needs, Aga Memnon gathered an army of the greatest heroes and princes, esteemed rulers of tribes and primitive communities. Most of them were wearing animal furs, were hairy, savagely ugly and possessed by the Furies. All they ever enjoyed was to get angry for no reason, quarrel, fight and kill whoever happened to be in front of them, women, children or men alike. The greatest honour

was to kill a dragon, but no dragons were left alive, all of them being slain by mortal heroes willing to boost their earthly careers.

Knowing about the spying black bird, Prometina and her friends manufactured a special machine and planted it in Aga Memnon's house under a big amphora. Then, they sent one spirit to occupy the plastic space in a Minotaur Bull's mural painting. It was most important to perpetuate the image and identity of the Bull over millennia. There were lots of spirits living undisturbed and unsuspected in the visual depictions on the wall. Most of the mortals hadn't had any idea about these entities, except for a few witches who were usually burnt at stake by priests bothered by the competition. The witches were using holes of cauldrons to prepare their potion, while priests were using walking sticks. Then they had a diabolical idea – if the witches liked so much to boil liquids in pots, why not make it their official profession forever?

Since then, in Aga Memnon's kingdom all women were obliged to cook and boil in cauldrons, pots and pans for their families and neighbours. To render them more useful, the women were obliged to establish numerous families, delivering one child per year, for the glory of the king and his army. Many women protested against these laws and ran away to the never-ending forests, spanning all over the kingdoms of the time. To stop women from running away, the kings got together in an international council and decreed that all forests had to be chopped down, indiscriminately. But they couldn't touch goddess Diana's forest, deep into the Carpathian Mountains. So, all the dissident women ran away to take hide in this forest, asking for Diana's divine protection.

Robina Hu Dina was entrusted with the mission to hunt a job around Helen, find out as much as possible about her whereabouts and help her in need. In the meantime, the Minotaur and the secret machine were recording everything was being said and done in Aga Memnon's house, related to their private, intimate or public affairs. One morning, a dialogue about a wooden horse filled with ruthless soldiers sent as a friendly and divine present came through. The wooden horse was nothing else but Trok, the humped bull, ruminating grass from a suspended stone trough. Trok was worshiped by old priests, followers of the ancient mysteries of the humped bull that could conceive within its hunch. Trok was taken care by Olaf, the mythical cattle herder, thought to have been half-human, half-fish. Olafish was the first archetype of the Herder Shepherd, later named Orpheus and Gabartur.

Prometina was promptly informed. The women in her gang worked unceasingly, days and nights, to create a special witchcraft that could make the wooden horse vanish into thin air, together with the soldiers within. They quickly persuaded Helen and Paris to flee to the Carpathian wild forest owned by goddess Diana, crossing the Mediterranean and reaching the Black Sea. On the way, they stopped to rest in Lascaux cave, drew some paintings on the walls, imprinted their palm shapes and fingerprints, named a fortress and went on their way.

Back in Troy, Robina Hu Dina dressed in Helen's dresses walked hand in hand with a boy that looked exactly like young Paris. Nobody suspected anything. Around noon, a large army invaded and threatened to kill anybody if Helen wasn't offered to their Great God Pricumuss. Paris wasn't needed, but he could have the common sense to commit seppuku or harakiri. Being long haired, big eyed, no beard, Aga Memnon and his brave soldiers tended to mistake him for a woman, so they needed to

get rid of him quickly. The boy had a small cushion filled with blood under his coat and used a fake sword to throw himself into it and everybody thought he died. The rival army left, leaving a squadron behind them as a sign of friendship and mutual help.

Robina Hu Dina, the greatest witch of them all, was taken with them dressed in Helen's clothes. When she was left alone with Pricumuss, she uttered the magic formula "Pha That Photi Sarath Luang Prabang" and the big stone phallus fell to the ground, breaking into small pieces. Then, she vanished. Enraged, the god had a heart attack and died. Since that day, they kept bringing young maidens to his dark cave, but in the night the maidens were taken back by a team of partisans, leaving behind only their dresses. Aga Memnon and his clique never suspected anything, they were convinced the maidens were swallowed and devoured by the hungry god.

Now, it was high time to let people know about the secrets famous royal families had. For instance, Aga Memnon and his wife Clite Mnestra had a terrible and legendary tragedy nobody found out about but Prometina. When he finished his adventure with Helen, he brought back home with him a young girl named Cassandra to make his coffee and foretell the future discovered on the bottom of the porcelain cup. While her old husband had gone to war, Clite Mnestra was happy in love with a young boy, one of her son's Oreste school mates, Aegisthus.

Bothered by his presence, the queen and Cassandra poisoned his tea and left him to die drunk and pissed on himself. A new king was chosen right away in the person of Aegisthus, whose electoral campaign was sponsored by Clite Mnestra's own money. Aga Memnon's dead body was thrown into a deep abyss, in the way he personally instructed in his will, in order to be devoured by glorious vultures. The question is why Aga Memnon was chasing women around, faking information about Helen being

his spouse, when everybody knew his wife was Clite Mnestra?

He wanted to brag about it and make every mortal man envy him for having the best women. Nobody knew but Robina Hu Dina that king Aga Memnon dared to try to rape her. Fortunately, he was too drunk and Robina succeeded to tie him tight with a long veil, and left him to sleep naked in his own vomit and faeces. Generally, this is what kings and noble heroes usually did in ancient times, chase and rape vulnerable women, otherwise life would have been extremely boring for them. Actually, Aga Memnon wasn't Helen's husband, but he covered for Menelaos, his brother of the same blood, though nobody was sure about it. Menelaos from Laos complained to him about the fact that his main wife, Elena, was cheating on him with a younger noble warrior, some prince, while he was busy having fun with the concubines in his numerous harem.

Taking advantage of the name coincidence, Aga Memnon and his royal advisers pretended that Helen of Troy and Elena from Laos are one and the same person. This was useful for Aga Memnon's politics; he was always looking for trouble, in order to have a pretext to invade any country he fancied. Now that Clite Mnestra and Cassandra got rid of him, Elena and her witches did the same, acting on the precedent created in Greece, sending Menelaos to Hades. They warned Orpheus to never search for him there. Then, one serene day, Orestes was left penniless and forced to remain sober, for he had no more booze. Thus, he remembered his parents were rich.

He was playing cards with Menelaos in Tam Pa Ling cave, talking to the oldest skull in the region, calling him his dear great-grand-father, just like his royal descendent Hamlet did later. Depressed, drug addicted and in extreme poverty, he came back home, killed his mother and her young husband, took over the kingdom, married his niece and ruled the country in-between monstrous drinking orgies.

Gods were looking from high above, now and then. Seeing things continue in the traditional way, they had no worries. All laws were respected and life was as harsh and impossible to live as always, only to make humans sorry they were born. After all, this is why gods exist, to inforce on humans the bitter, short destiny of slavery in poverty, malnutrition, helplessness and desperation, serving their demi-god bastard heroes conceived with mortal females, who consented to be raped or not. Raping mortal females was the favourite occupation of Zeus and his half-blood offspring, and this is what they did all eternity.

One morning, Zeus decided to turn into a bull and kidnap a princess named Europa. Next day he became a golden rain entering the threshold of Danae. In the same deceiving mode were seduced Rhea, Hera, Alcmene, Callisto, Cassiopeia and Leda. He was acting in secrecy most of the times, he rarely needed secondary gods to assist him. Thus, a whole pack of demi-gods invested with ruling authority and super-heroic powers were created, to master the insignificant mortal humans and multiply using their naïve daughters. By all accounts, only a couple of years ago, a woman was transformed into a star and soon enough she managed to have a child with a meteorite.

GIRMITA

Girmita was a young orphaned girl. All her family members died during an earthquake and she was left alone, lying hungry and scared in a humid ditch, covered in dirt.

– Girmita, where are you?

– Down here, in the upholstered pit.

– Girmita, you know we played nicely together. Come with me.

Girmita and Viti Ratu Pulishin were now flying on the back of a huge bird shaped just like a square table. The head of the bird was enormous, and so was the beak. Wounded by the thunder, the bird fell into the sea, where it turned into a ship. Girmita and Viti Ratu were floating on the sea now, heading towards a mysterious place.

The young couple landed in the central square of a small provincial town. A mayor, a judge and a priest were singing something Girmita couldn't understand, bowing in front of the huge bronze statue of a male wearing a helmet and a sword. As soon as they saw the young couple were shy, they encouraged them to come closer.

– Woman, is this man your husband?

– No.

– Then what are you doing together, unwedded?

– We were playing, said Viti Ratu Pulishin.

– This is against the law of this place and we got to have you married in order to be allowed to talk to each other and play together, said the judge.

– Take this man as your loving husband and make many children to him. Respect him, clean and cook for him, and make him happy, said the mayor.

– I don't know, I am not sure... I don't want to..., the girl mumbled.

– There is no other option for you. You either get married to this man or starve. You cannot step on this island unmarried, said the priest.

– I want to work and make my own money.

– Women are not allowed to work. But you can be a prostitute if you like.

– No, I take Viti Ratu Pulishin as my lawfully wedded husband, said Girmita, crying bitter tears.

– Now repeat after me, said one of the imposing fat-bellied men in front of them: *I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where I work and live. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Islander Elders of all communities who work and live on this land.*

The boy and the girl repeated the words almost without realizing their meaning. It was useless to try to understand or to oppose them, anyway. They could do nothing else than obey. They were married now, Viti Ratu Pulishin could sleep with Girmita on the same carpet, action completely forbidden beforehand. Yet, they had no bed and no house, only a hole into the limestone chalk wall guarding the wide beach. The carpet was a gift from the authorities to make the new comers feel welcome and procreate quicker for the benefit of the community.

At dawn, Viti Ratu Pulishin woke up. Girmita saw it was actually night, not morning, but it did not matter anyway, she

could cuddle in bed for more hours. The boy woke up to go to work as a proud man should do, while his wife stayed at home cleaning the room and trying to cook some shell soup. After the wedding ceremony, Girmita and Viti Ratu Pulishin were put down in the Village Book four times each, with names spelled slightly incorrect, to make it look they were different people and thus create the impression of a large, prosperous population. Pumping his chest, Viti Ratu felt glorious in the moment he heard about it and considered himself four dissociated men, not one individual. He was convinced, like many other males on that particular island - dirty, ugly, vicious and cruel – that he is four in one, not one person.

– Viti Ratu Pulishin, do not tell your woman about it, knowledge plays tricks on their minds. They should only know what we allow them to know. Anything that reaches their minds has to be about reproduction.

– Yeah, this is their destiny, to serve and multiply us. Plain to see.

– They can't do anything else properly. And they cannot take too much knowledge. Don't you know the story of the maiden who killed herself because she couldn't count all the stars in the sky?

– How did she die?

– She hanged herself using her own long, plaited hair.

– Maybe she killed herself because she couldn't marry the boy she loved.

– Who cares? They should obey and go with the man that asks them to. Shouldn't be too choosy, said a worker.

– Viti Ratu, you have strange ideas. Be careful, don't spread them around. It might be dangerous. A lion could eat you and your wife, said another one.

Viti Ratu Pulishin felt threatened and kept silent. “People are not too friendly here”, he thought to himself. What should they do? Maybe they should run away to another island. So they ran away in the middle of the night taking the carpet with them, which caused the local Police to chase them in order to recover the public property. They grabbed the couple and brought them back, adding a long list of crimes to their indictment. The main one and the most serious was the crime of eating too much sugar which urgently causes a disease of the colon named Colonialita. It is a silent, invisible killer, manifesting through ghost haunting. Bluntly put, they were accused of haunting innocent sleepers, by perturbing their dreams. Following a long public trial and a torture session, they were punished to live in trees, never touch ground again and gnaw a sweetened flag while repeating the oath: *I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where I work and live. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Islander Elders of all communities who work and live on this land.*

A UNICORN IS ALWAYS WHITE

This story is about Kipra, the immaculately white unicorn. Usually, he was playing nicely with his horn, singing happily, not bothered by anything else but episodic fits of boredom. On his patch of triangular land, there was always summer and the night was short. The unicorn lived in a beautiful garden adorned with delightful, perfumed flowers, in all colours and shapes. He had no preference, rather he liked them all the same. It made no difference to him.

One day, he encountered a black hen with a ruby red crest on her head. The hen was charming and being in a fantastic realm, it caused her size to be that of a cow, not to say that she could talk.

– I can even sing and dance, she told Kipra.

– What’s your name, wonderful creature?

– Mohroda. Yours?

– Kipra, enchante, mademoiselle, said the unicorn, taking a courtly bow.

The hen fell in love on the spot. The unicorn was so white, so charming and polite, suitable for a knightly court! She stood no chance from the beginning. Kipra was happy, finally he found somebody to talk to and spend time together. He invited Mohroda to his house, an imperial cave lavishly and luxuriously designed to suit his fantasies. There was a library containing an impressive collection of amazing books gathered from all the realms of relative and concrete reality.

Stepping graciously, the hen opened a book and read about the mythical five-legged creature mistook by an amateur for an elephant, then about a two-headed horse with eight legs which used to live in the Far Sea Land. She gasped in amazement, closing her eyes. The Far Sea Land, where could it be? What mysteries are waiting to be found there?

Then she took the *Cyclopedia* in 1001 volumes painted in sepia and adorned with fish scales, which came together with the *Compendium of Philosophical Transactions and Taxations*. She wondered what taxation could mean, as there were no taxes in their heaven. There were 1000 Cyclops featured in the collection, each one wearing elaborated wigs, crystal glasses and long, thick, golden necklaces hanging over bouffant clothes and white foamy collars.

– Count Cyclop Wallam III of Hatar, son of Jaunatan I Baron of Hatar and Eleanor Neterr, read the hen out loud.

– Yes, Cyclopedia is my greatest treasure. Look at them, how they both had one eye placed in the middle of the forehead, covered by a pair of folded-lens eyeglasses. These special double crystal lenses helped them to keep three-dimensional vision even in the multidimensional realities they weren't accustomed to. Isn't it wonderful?

– Truly remarkable, I should say.

A romantic guitar could be heard playing in the distance and the unicorn asked the hen for a dance. They danced tightly embraced till the evening unexpectedly fell and the hen had no choice but to stay for the night. They dined in the moonlight, whose spark was enforced by the glittering adamite table illuminated from beneath. It was truly magic. The hen wassipping pinkish Champaign rosé fascinated by the whiteness of

the unicorn. From that magic moment on, they lived forever happy and never parted, except from when he had to go to work. They entered a new level of the concrete reality. Thus they found themselves in a realm populated with vicious creatures worshipping the house door as their god, sprinkling it with the blood of the enemies in celebration.

There, the unicorn had no chance to an imperial cave, not even a royal one, so he had to accept a modest living. Soon, they realized they can't live without working, precisely without wages or any type of earnings. Not fit for commerce due to his reading habit and anxious to offer his wife a comfortable life, Kipra accepted to collect imperial taxes set on windows' dust, hair powder and smoke that came out of the chimneys after being channeled through five different chambers according to the Law of the Mechanics of Fire. The difficulty lied in the fact that the natives didn't allow him to get close to the door, claiming it was sacred, so it was hard for him to do his job.

The hen gave him the idea to open an office in the town centre, where the locals could come to hand the taxes themselves. When her husband was gone to work, the hen remained at home practicing various sports to stay fit and maintain the size of a delicate cow. She preferred indoor imperial sports such as throwing frozen pizzas and hamburgers directly into the oven. In the summer time, she enjoyed popping fireworks on the houses of the natives, sharing her love and appreciation with the greatest zeal. When her black and white unicorned chickens hatched out of eggs, she used to relax reading *Cyclopedia* in the sunshine to maintain her tan.

When the chickens went to school, one serene summer noon, while walking in the garden, she met a fawn who was

smiling at her. She did not fall in love just yet, but felt butterflies were flying in her large stomach. She kept thinking about the attractive fawn and why didn't he address her. The hen went there each day at the same hour hoping to see him again but he never came. When she gave up hoping, a centaur came her way, stopped right in front of her and kissed her passionately on the lips under a cherry tree in bloom. Next day, Mohroda packed her bags and left for an exotic holiday.

OLDOWAN

One day, young boy Oldowan decided to become a shepherd. To avoid the strong sunshine at midday, he was hiding inside a Yushania alpine bamboo shadow box carried by his donkey Buridan. Oldowan liked the woolly sheep and the sound of their bells. He knew each one of them and talked affectionately to them during milking. One of them, Meorita, talked back to him whenever necessary. When melancholy, Oldowan blew an ivory horn, the sheep were dancing and he felt better. One day, while managing his gang of docile sheep, he came across a beautiful stone lying down on the ground. Looking down upon it, he saw that the stone had the face of a woman carved on it. The female's face was positioned in profile in such a way that she couldn't be seen in entirety, as if hiding.

– This girl is alive, Oldowan told himself in awe, feeling strange emotions boiling in his veins.

He did not feel anything in his head, being covered with a thick hat adorned with three feathers to prevent feelings, emotions and uncontrollable states of mind to enter his cranium and his heart, busy to pump blood and fresh oxygen to billions of cells. It was quite an industry there. In a few hours, he decided to marry the charming stone and start a family. After the wedding, he loved the stone five times and then went to sleep. That night, he dreamed the stone woman came to life and talked to him.

– Ta netjer, Kumarbi.

She then added that soon she is going to have a stone child to inherit the glorious father. When Oldowan woke up, he couldn't remember the dream, but since that night he called the stone woman Kumarbi. In a few months, a new stone appeared, his beloved son. Oldowan was very happy and drank a huge quantity of wine to celebrate. Inebriated, he lost his way while grazing the sheep. He found himself in the land of Sesepese with Goliath the frog named Conrad in that realm. He had to cross six rotten plank bridges in Punt to break the curse and recover his opera singer voice or just kiss a princess. But where could he find a princess? Long ago, he was Orpheus, the greatest singer, but a wizard transformed him into a frog, the biggest ever, still not good enough for him. He lived in a house built on a square four legged table made of mahogany.

– Why did you build the house on the table? It should be the other way around.

– What do you mean? The table above the house? Are you crazy?

– No, the table inside the house.

– You don't know what you are saying. Then how could the house grow legs?

– The house doesn't need legs. What if the house will run away? It's got legs, for God's sake!

– Now I am scared the house will run away and leave me here. Tomorrow I am going to cut its legs off.

– Better leave it this way. You need a small table inside to eat on it.

– Climb on the table and eat on it?

– Not climbing, but sitting down on a chair. You put the food on the table, in front of you.

– I prefer to eat standing up.

– Do as you please, said Oldowan.

– Will you kiss me?

– No, I am not a princess! an exasperated Oldowan replied, pushing him away.

– But you can dress as a princess!

– I will not dress as a princess, not in a million years.

– Please, my friend, I need to recover my beautiful voice to be able to sing divinely again. I was able to trill and chirp like a nightingale and now, all I can do is croak like a crow. The most beautiful girls came to listen to me. Ribit, ribit!

Conrad the Goliath frog was very stubborn in his frustration and Oldowan felt sleepy.

HIJACKERS OF THE E-MOONS 80 SYSTEM

When Copierrenicus claimed the planet was round and floating into the wide dark space, people all over the world fainted and puked out of anxiety. Scared of being taken away to the unfriendly space by a cosmic storm, they clung to the Earth with all their limbs, holding on tightly to it. What if a cosmic secretary bird accidentally sits on their planet and, by being too heavy, causes it to fall into the void? Encouraged by the shocking discovery, a lunatic proposed the law of inverse squares discovered while he was drawing lines on a sphere. Another one outraged the whole nation saying that white light is compounded of various colours. Most of them went delirious. It was a time of social unrest, mental trauma and inner turmoil. One of them, Skeppleri, a son of a witch and of a ruthless mercenary, was wasting time watching stars each night, instead of grooming horses as a useful member of community should do. He named this obsession *Celestial Physics Science*, but nobody was convinced. Trying to peep on the heavens like Aristotle and all the cohort of ancient, mad, pagan beggars did long time ago, is definitely not a reliable science. Standing up in awe, with one's mouth open under the starry sky, was completely shameful and useless. He was summoned to court, harshly judged as a lazy humbug and the public phobia calmed down for a few weeks.

A new signal of alarm was issued by the concerned authorities when a table of the moons of Jupiter was printed in

four copies, one for each cardinal point. The booklet was calculating the eclipses of the moons of the planet Jupiter and used it as a way of finding location in navigation. Although a plain work of witchcraft, the book was appreciated by the seafarers and *Confirm location* became the new successful prayer of the day.

Suffering of some form of delirium, Cashini and O'Leroeme discovered eighty moons dancing around planet Jupiter. They named the finding 80 E-moons system of Jupiter. In fascination, they gave names to 57 of them, leaving 23 anonymous, being mainly interested in the first four of them: Io, Europa, Ganimede and Callisto. More lunatics with their heads in the clouds were attracted by the *Celestial Physics* and started to clandestinely peek on the divine presence in the sky.

One day, a woman hysterically screamed she found the eye of god Ra. It was on Jupiter, and Ra used it to look at humans. The famous godly eye was always open and seemed to shift in size, shrinking or enlarging, at ease. Even if it was an orange ochre tinge, the woman named it the Great Red Spot, which unfortunately had nothing to do with the Red Sea, the Red Army or Little Red Riding Hood. The eye was carried by a storm at a speed of 400 miles or 643 km per hour. The authorities promptly intervened and put the woman in an asylum, where the doctors proposed a hysterectomy as the solution to improve her mental health.

Many publicly acclaimed scientists felt envy and challenged the validity of this discovery. "Ochre is mediocre", they repeated in mockery. All the females were officially despised and shamed. Even the politicians were scandalized and warned women they should better release humanity from the

dietetic tyranny. Males grouped in protests, requesting higher education to be prohibited for females. You don't need academic knowledge or higher education to hold a frying-pan in your hands. Financed by the state authorities, most of the scientists and academics spent time making copies of famous historical texts, placing within intentional errors. They enjoyed replacing letter "i" with letter "e" or double "ee". Whenever their eyesight got tired, they were experimenting on how donkeys choose between two equally sized haystacks when hungry. Poor donkeys could never make up their minds and died of starvation. The scientists had a lot of fun. Others were throwing balls out of a tower, while some of them were standing under apple trees, counting how many apples fall in a day, calculating the speed of the falling.

Furiously, they all gathered and published a critical reply of the Ra's Eye Theory, arguing that it's clearly an illusion. It's plain to see that what can be observed there is a mirror egg incorrectly placed in the pan, reason why the yolk is flowing randomly on its surface. Women should learn how to cook better and stop looking at the sky. Incorrectly cooked, food becomes dangerous and starts to devour the bowels of innocent children, blocking their arteries and veins. Besides, what the scientists saw there was no eye, but the ear of God listening to all sinners, plus a man riding a huge two-headed chicken, a delicious cream pie and a duckling.

Fed up with donkeys, balls and apples, a young boy sat down at the table and calculated the iris diaphragm, using a silver hook. He was supported by his mother, an avid reader of French almanacs and encyclopedias in secrecy. He and his school mate had read Leonardo Da Vinci's instructions and created a telescope with mirror lens, to study the sky closer. It was as if they were walking among the stars. The boys realized there is an

enormous number of stars and planets in the universe, each moving harmoniously, following a predefined and logical pattern. They were talking about ellipses and galaxies, solar systems and what not.

When his mother published their findings in a scientific journal under a fake identity, the roar of the academic world was deafening. Just like a lion in the jungle, it jumped at their throats. Unfortunately, they could never find out the real identities of the boys or, if they did, they couldn't possibly accept the fact that some school kids were better than them. To smother the theory in its inception, the scientists issued a book signed by their most notable historian of religions.

Eli Ades decidedly stated that there are no solar systems, but giant cosmic spiders building huge cobwebs to catch void dust, cosmic stones and innocent souls alike, to make them come to life on a particular planet. They tricked them to materialize in various forms of existence on the planets, only to serve the small spiders in those locations. This theory was crafted after countless experiments and was consistent with the ancient theory of the similarity between microcosm and macrocosm. Directly put, the microcosm is constantly mirroring the macrocosm and we needn't look at the sky to understand what's happening there, we can very well see it in the natural background of our own comfortable planet.

In the meantime, Hobese created a new theory, one that should perfectly serve the purpose of mankind. It was titled the *Rights of Mankind* which stated clearly that all knowledge should be tailored to match what men want. Because mind is a *white paper* or a blank tablet called *tabula rasa* on which new ideas have to be inscribed, these ideas should always be convenient for the men's system of thought. Patiently, assisted by Blocke, Hobese demonstrated why all that people must know *should be*

in conformity of anything with our own knowledge, observation and experience.

– All that they learn in schools should match what we want them to know, nothing else, declared Hobese.

– Obviously and without any doubt, nodded Blocke.

It was 17.00 o'clock in the morning because time was measured vice versa in those times. Based on the theory of cause and e-fact, the scientists started to build their own new world from scratch, by *clearing the ground ... of rubbish*, imprinting in all minds the data in conformity of anything with their knowledge. The system was pompously named *Mediathan or the Matter, Form and Power of the Commonwealth Meant to Improve the Mind and the Body of Great People*.

– Homo homini lupus. Men are savage and they need to be tamed before they kill each other, argued Hobese.

– No, savage man is timid and afraid, replied Brusseau in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality while Sleeping*. Why are males waking up earlier than females? If it weren't the case, then as timid and afraid as they are, they would definitely lose the race. Females are cunning, monstrously charming beasts, esteemed colleagues. Let's not give them the upper hand!

Next day, an invasion of lice was recorded. Scores of alien, metallic, smart lice were seen feeding on the heads of the people, leaving them weak and powerless. These Lokisum lice were carrying microscopic tablets on their backs, extracting ideas directly from the brains through the blood, inoculating unknown ones instead. But only ideas in conformity of anything with the permitted knowledge of the Elders were legally allowed to imprint into their brains. All the inimical ideas should be chased, caught and destroyed, and the state authorities launched a hunt party on a national scale, unofficially spread internationally.

Everyone catching wrong ideas would be rewarded with

twenty bottles of their preferred alcohol. It was a time of great glory and courage and many men became heroes overnight. One of the venerable generals lost a leg in a close fight, body to body, with a logical silogism, and a military funeral was organized to comfort him for his loss.

Many of them were taken prisoners by evil ideas which messed with their mental health. All victims of ferocious ideas were gathered into a hospice to be carefully monitored. Certainly, they weren't aware they were mentally ill, they perceived themselves as healthy, but they had real doubts about the doctors. The patients were convinced that the doctors were quite abnormal. In this place which looked like a luxurious Roccoco hotel, patients were having fun doing what they liked to do.

One of them, a hairy old man, chased the women around with a forceps in his hands. His fat friend was holding a needle and a thread, running behind him, yelling:

– Pass through the ears of the needle as the camel did it long time ago, you can do it! No pain, no gain.

A priest was following them holding a cauldron of water, stolen from a witch, singing:

– I baptize you with water, but the Lord Almighty will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

A nazi was laughing maleficently on the top of a Greek column, sitting comfortably in a nest. He lived there thinking he

is a stork, squeezing a towel soaked in blood. Standing up on one leg, he tried to convince himself that he is not human. All the others were chasing an umpire on the hallway for cheating during a football match. Afraid not to be killed, the umpire hid inside a wardrobe, shivering in silence till the doctors saved him.

A young woman with a deformed face said she is truly Mary the Virgin and she brought Jesus into this world each Christmas, but men stoned her for losing her virginity afterwards. She was searching everywhere for her lost hymen, crying:

– It must be here somewhere, have you seen it? Give it back to me!

A middle-aged man called himself Prime Minister, stepping in the office with half-naked body-guards, repeating:

– Statistics, statistics, we need statistics. Create social content!

Then there was a mad drunkard who acted like a prophet, telling them to stop sinning and start procreating:

– Be fruitful and multiply, spread out over the Earth and multiply till you start fighting each other for food, water and land!

It was obvious the situation was very serious. Mental research was funded by the state to study how can ideas destroy the balance of the brain, turning people into zombies. It's not easy to be held hostage by an idea. It is an invisible and dangerous enemy, lurking in the dark, infinite depth of the unconscious.

Plato was trying to describe how the mental levels work, showing two walls of the cave and the light of the conscious reason burning in-between them. The unconscious was the back wall of the cave, the worst abyss where the most savage and

beastly instincts boiled like pit in hell. Demons strive to get out into the light and free themselves to reach the upper level. The unconscious wall is as deep as the cosmic void and diving in it meant certain madness.

Ignoring Plato, Hobese and Blocke were convinced that the mind is a photographic box hidden in the darkness like a gangster in the closet, to catch a glimpse of any idea through a small, narrow slot. That's why immediate measures for national protection needed to be implemented rapidly.

– We are analyzing codex 47 El libri I which is the 47th proposition of the Euclidean law. Who knows what I am talking about?

– That's Pythagoras' theorem about the squares on the sides of a right-angled triangle, answered A. A. Byron King-Noel, a woman transvestite as a man.

– You mean Pythagoras was hiding inside Euclid all this time? asked PhD candidate Eldtrick Tont Woods.

– By G, this is impossible! said Curke.

Sensing danger in losing credibility, Hobese followed the steps, one by one, back to the elementary axioms from which it was proved that Euclid and Pythagoras were right and Plato was wrong.

– Why was Plato wrong? asked the transvestite.

– All who stated that the mind is immaterial and separate from the body are wrong, young man. Can you separate your thoughts from what your body wants?

– What do you mean? added Augusta, the author of the ignored theses *Banalytical Angine*.

– It means mind is just another small body, hidden inside our own corporeal bodies. We are all bodies in motion in a

material, corporeal world. But because mind is moving subtly, we cannot perceive it, thus we consider it invisible.

– Like air particles?

– Exactly.

– Then it means that the mind is compounded of air particles? asked Tont.

– More on this subject next session, at call.

– *The answer is blowing in the wind*, said Augusta, scoffing.

– I find your comments stupid and offensive.

– Well, I know that Charles Darwin had a fake beard. You cannot trick me! exclaimed Tont.

Pretending not to hear the comment, they all took a random walk to have dinner together in a luxurious restaurant. There, they kept congratulating each other on how intelligent and famous they were. The society honoured them and paid for all their expenses. After death, they were all promised to be transformed into marble or bronze statues placed on the streets bearing their names. This is why they liked to roam around, choosing the streets they would like to spend their immortality on. Next day, they handed the result of their working session to the state authorities. In a stately funded project of national importance, the scientists were entrusted with the task of choosing the national symbol to be featured on the national flag. After long deliberation and hard work, they chose a fat turkey.

HUAYNA CAPAC LISTENER TO ALL PEOPLES

Before gods existed, there was chaos and gas everywhere in this world, featured in the size of a small island. Only horrific monsters could breathe in that poisonous atmosphere. That ancestral island was named Apantina and Huayna Capac was the queen. Later, waters withdrew, revealing more dry land to be inhabited by lots of beasts and a few humans. Nevertheless, you had to cross seven seas and seventy forests to reach that distant place nobody knew it ever existed. Elinca Gani Laso Bontaine happened to be there and witness that truly unbelievable situation. Being isolated, this little island kept the traditional religion exactly in the way their patriarchs left it behind. They worshiped Cronos and this titanic force was worse than any other ever existed before.

One day, a broken boat shipwrecked on the shores of Apantina. Inside, an unconscious young man was found, Elinca Gani Laso, who was taken to the royal palace where he was assisted in his recovery. In a few days, he could face the queen and her curiosity.

- Where do you come from, stranger?
- From across the ocean.
- What's your name?
- Elinca, Elinca Gani Laso.
- Elinca, tell me your story.

Slowly, Elinca learned the language of the Apantinas and their way of life. What seemed weird to him was their religion, which imprinted a certain mind set and character into their

people. Wishing to know more, Elinca asked the queen about it. Huayna Capac told him about Cronos who had a wife that was young, beautiful and happy in the beginning, but very quickly tables turned. After she had her first child, Rea was taking a nap to rest a bit, together with the child. When she woke up, the child was gone.

- Where is our child, beloved Cronos?
- I don't know, I haven't seen it.
- You were supposed to take care of him, it's our baby.
- I am telling you I haven't seen it. Trust me. The child is gone now, but we can have another one.

Rea was crying all the time, heartbroken. When she had another child, the young mother was guarding him night and day. When Cronos ordered her to present the child, she took a boulder in the shape of a baby, dressed it nicely and gave it to her husband. Then she stooped down and peeped through a hole outside the cave. Taken by madness, Cronos swallowed the rock and went to sleep. Rea was shocked. So that's what happened to her first baby, it was eaten by his own father. Since then, Rea took all her babies away and hid them in caves. This religion was written in the Holy Book of Patriarch Cronos, and Rea kept it on the island since the beginning of the world.

As a queen and a High Priestess, Huayna Capac was responsible with guarding the Holy Book and its religious truths. Of course, all her children were eaten by the king and she had to obey the ancient faith and accept the tragic reality without showing pain or discontent. This was more than Elinca could bear to hear. Trying to control his emotions, he hopped on one leg for five minutes, singing a traditional folk tune, beating his head with a wooden stick. The queen laughed, she liked his dance.

- Is this your religious ritual? she asked.
- Yes, your highness, and I have many others.
- Tell me more.
- I can chase any lady without ever getting tired.
- You are just like my late husband. Let's get married. Be my king, she said, offering him a dove's beating heart.
- I accept, Elinca said, eating it. It's sweet, he added.

At the wedding, everybody was crying and wailing, because that was their custom. It was really sad and touching. In a year, they had a child and when the time came, the queen left Elinca alone with his child. Even if the boy was ugly like his mother, Elinca loved him. The queen and the royal court were astonished. The boy was still alive, situation completely antagonistic to their religion. They tried to improve it by framing various accidents, but Elinca was very attentive. One night, he took the child and disappeared, never to be seen again. There he wrote a book titled *Patriarcha and Absolute Fatherly Powers*, kept hidden ever since.

The queen was informed that a huge feathered snake came out of the ocean and swallowed them both, to punish them for the sin they committed. Huayna Capac found her peace and everything went back to normal on Apantina.

DOBITO ERGO SUM

Radical doubt which is not to be confounded with *reasonable doubt* was the new philosophy in great fashion during a certain century in that particular place. It was outlined by the great thinker Decarte in the darkness of the night, when he was regularly visited by his fiancé's ghost, recently deceased of tuberculosis. There were long, exhausting nights when Decarte and Camellia Lisa Vedraq talked about meteorites, geometry and ancient philosophy. In the daytime, he scribbled down all he heard from his beloved. Gradually, the fashionable philosophical system took shape.

The first pillar in the philosophy of doubt was *Dobito ergo sum*, urging him to doubt anything he saw, heard, smelled, tasted or touched. It wasn't easy, especially when he had his desert loaded with cups of sweet cream and vanilla powdered sugar. Any piping hot crusty roast freshly taken out of the oven he saw he would put it in his mouth without second thought.

– *Diubito ergo sum* obliges you to scrutinize anything, wandering through your mental space. Careful, do not let them insert a thought insufficiently verified by your super ego, without your consent. It can easily happen. When the bird has flown, there is nothing to be done about it, said Camellia.

– I thought you said *Dobito ergo sum*. My father told me never let the bird in your hand fly away wishing for another bird in the tree.

– That is a wise piece of advice, indeed. The other pillar of doubt philosophy is *De omenibus diubitandum* or how to elegantly step out of the bus by walking on your hands, without being noticed.

Listening to Camellia, Decarte created his method in detail, accurately explained in the volume titled *Discourse on Method and Against*. The trick was to mask ponderability and unmask the imponderable, because it is far too old and, anyway, they can buy any car, for your own good, not for your pleasure.

– Let's not forget that Rablais had the same opinion and with this in mind he wrote *Gargantua and Pantagrue*, trying to compete with Miguel de Qijote and his *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

– I doubt it, Cyrano was Baron Ricketts of the 5th Grade in the Royal Circle.

– No, my darling Cortez, Miguel's real name was Don Qijote and he wrote the book titled *Miguel de Cervantes and the Windy Sky*. You see, it was a terrible storm when the idea hit him in the left parietal lobe with a sharp blow. He screamed out loud. Unfortunately, nobody could hear him, but me. And by the way, you know studying Greek language is forbidden, one might find some errors slipped in Luke's *Gospel* commented by Desiderius. You know, they could hardly find three wise men in the Nativity episode and they weren't even named.

– You are wonderful, dearest Camellia. I think Erasmus wrote it. Wasn't he a Spaniard like Qijote, while Rablais was a Greek native speaker?

– Does Alcofribas Nasier sound Greek to you? It rather makes me think of some kind of alcohol, and I surely detest it. What difference does it make, anyway, and what could he do? Smuggle some books in the illegal Cyrillic alphabet into his

room? It was worse than frequenting prostitutes. But *Praise of Folly* is the funniest account of the real world I have ever laid my hands on, smiled the woman.

– It could be some sort of old Greek, already forgotten. He might have liked to drink, like any other man. We are weak, my precious, that's the truth everybody is hiding, admitted Decarte.

In broad lines, the RD method short for *Radical Doubt* was targeted against the Arch Deceiver, the Great Illusionary or the Trickster. What Camellia kept repeating while banging his head with her Japanese paper umbrella was to break any thought into pieces by crushing it in a mortar, using a pestle. Carefully grind any unreasonable thought or proposal, till it turns into dust, then blow it in the wind with a kiss or viceversa. The order of the actions can and will be reversed, if necessary. But the main point is to try hard to imagine your head as a mortar, and your logical reasoning a pestle, and use them both to rip into pieces anything that crossed your mind.

– Now, Cortez, don't forget about the *Rock of Thought*. Some thoughts are as hard as stone, and can hardly be broken. These unbreakable thoughts are sometimes lethal, following a thought insertion operation. These thoughts are inserted into your head and grow there, till the grey matter in the cranium quietly explodes.

– Dear Camellia, I am Cartes, not Cortez, my lovely. You forgot?

– That's what you think, darling, but I know better. You were Cortez and they changed your name afterwards. Don't bother about it. Cortez or Cartes, it's all the same, the difference

is in the way you pronounce it. For instance, if we say Cervantes or Cervantos is still the same, isn't it?

– Allow me to disagree, my eternal beauty. I think it is Cerbantes El Manco de Lepanto. As far as I know, he was a slave sent to work as a secret agent in Africa, and was only allowed to use one hand during his secret mission.

– Disagree as much as you like, you will be deliberately ignored. Why, I am cold. This wind is so chilly!

– Well, we are in the Seven Hoolandias, of the Low Lands, it's seriously cool here. The count of Hoorn doesn't want to waste wood. Let me cover your heart with my shade, Light of my life!

– Get me a cup of hot tea! she said, and disappeared without saying good bye.

The morning sun was about to come out of a bizarre thick cloud to enlighten the whole world.

MONTESCUIEU SECON DAT

It was a new legendary era in that specific chronological coordinate of the bi-headed society. All men were working in the bureaucracy for the Statistics Ministry, launching individual projects in larger crowd funding enterprises. It was a highly secretive preoccupation, and all they had to do was to strictly come dancing, while spouses swallowed piles of rusty, crunchy nails. It was officially stated that women enjoy it, and absolutely no pain could be felt. Anybody who believed or publicly declared the opposite was exiled on the beach of an unexplored sea-shore, infested with crocodiles and reptiles.

At the Bulla office headquarters, the men had to take each citizen's name, generate various anagrams and multiply it by four. In a few days, they were advanced to a new position on the ground, where they had to take fresh clay, make small figurines of animals, put them inside clay balls scratched in cuneiforms, kiss, seal and burn them. Then burry them in a straw basket deep underground, sit comfortably and wait for the time to do its work. It was easy and efficient. This widelycoveted job was called *dubsar-ut*.

One day, a curious bald woman passed by the valley where they were secretly working hard. Her name was Montescuieu Secon Dat. The woman found an incorrectly produced clay ball lying flawed and deformed in broad daylight, in a ditch on Dareh Valley. It looked as if it was a small skull, partly eaten by rats. She took it in her hands and read a strange equation: $4=I=man=biped=god$. What could it be? Depositing the message

safely in her memory theatre, Montescuieu went home to tell her friends what she had discovered.

Not one of them knew what their men were up to, at work. Curiosity ate their tongues, because it is a fact that cats were completely forbidden in that place. Besides, the streets were built higher and higher, while the houses remained down under the level of the chariots, pushing all dust through the windows, right into their female's noses, causing uncontrollable coughs and acute skepticism. The epidemics was intentionally caused by the State Bureaucratic System, being well known that the stale dust makes women suffer of agraphia, acalculia, aphasia, agnosia. The reason was that the animal hooves entered into contact with the air particles, infecting them with the beneficial virus of submissiveness.

The experiment got out of control when Montescuieu Secon Dat went in the agora and started to scream out loud that she was pregnant with herself, waving a book titled *Reparation of Powers*, signed by her second alter ego. She explained how it all happened. It was a beautiful Sunday of life that May day, the sunshine was pouring on the meadows, warming and fertilizing them. Montescuie took a walk on the wild side of the Lavender Valley following a utility route assessment and installation guide, taking the path of least resistance. She saw a silver ladder, climbed on it and found herself in a flying cart driven by two winged golden bulls. She travelled nine months at the speed of light in deep spacetime, talking to the primordial darkness. Definitely, the project was a masterwork of inner engineering at a cosmic level. While travelling, the primordial darkness told her that the universe is not a giant turtle, moving extremely slowly, but a network of strings and chords vibrating in the eleventh dimension. *In each generation, a population of thirty chords is produced and evaluated.* The voice was laughing maniacally.

The most adventurous chords are first-inversion dominant sevenths, in measures 9 and 22. Nothing else was added to this.

She finished her speech just in time when a group of armed men were heading towards her. Seeing them, she started screaming hysterically: “I know that the primal father was a jerk! Maybe repetition is a beloved wife and probably the myth makes people sick, but they say that the desire is the truth and I find this to be gross indecency! Why, the master is supposed to know, but he claims the truth can only be half said. Be my agent, master signifier, I beg of you! There are good hysterics and bad hysterics, see, I am a good one. Take your hands off me, you brutes! Drop dead!” Clearly, she was out of her mind, given the mad discourse uttered in a public place, especially in a country where women are not allowed to speak.

The incident caused a national crisis which prompted a bloody revolution. A sorority was created on behalf of the Women Pregnant with Themselves, counteracted by the Brotherhood of Godly Men. For the first time in their history, their right to reproduction using women was threatened. An emergency tribunal was gathered and, in no time, they began judging the mad female. They made an attempt to obtain more information before making a judgement, but that was quite counterproductive.

During the hearings, she completely disagreed, claiming she was sent by God Lagren into their world to save the corrupt civilization. She was an alien from planet Jupiter, where both

females and males can conceive taking turns, if they want to. They don't use their bodies to do it, but their minds. She was hatching herself to generate a better version of herself, because she wasn't pleased with the way her parents conceived her – eyes too close, nose too long, legs too thick. She was also lactose intolerant and painful cramps were tormenting her intestines, followed by series of noisy flatulence between two and fifteen times a day, releasing carbon dioxide, nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen and methane.

The hearings were broadcasted live and the entire population had the unique opportunity to be instantly scandalized. Large angry crowds assaulted the Inverted Pyramid TV Station. Afraid of anarchy, they voted for the woman to be sent back where she came from, as soon as possible. For this to happen, they had to see how they can reach planet Jupiter, the seventh or the sixth in the solar system. First, they argued on this topic and couldn't agree who is right and who is wrong.

The culprit was detained in a humid basement till their scientists would discover the vehicle needed to travel there. Venerable Harsi proposed to use a bronze cart drawn by four winged bulls, another one mentioned a wooden box carried by one hundred vultures. Three wise Elders considered it might be better to leave the woman on the top of the highest mountain peak, to be recovered by her humankind, or get devoured by a monstrous beast.

Prophet Jupita began a new cult worshipping Jupiterians, invoking them on a daily basis. Whoever felt a slight sexual confusion was welcomed there, together with lunatics, drug addicts and androgens. Many baffled people invaded the new temple, elbowing each other till it fell to the ground, and a new majestic one had to be rebuilt. In the night, the new temple was

inaugurated, when a meteorite fell from the sky in a nimbus of fire and took the woman away.

A giant charcoaled hole remained where a petrous part of the temporal bone was discovered, together with an enigmatic message inscribed on a round token. Their secret service is still working hard to decode it, against the clock. Since then, their science rapidly flourished, and the foundations of the accountancy and advanced mathematics were firmly laid. Officially, they stated that the woman was eaten by a fire-spitting dragon, and everybody was happy to get back to their daily duties. *No need to cry over split milk*, said their king in his most urgent national appeal.

According to the freshest news, the woman was taken to a planet which looks like a rugby ball or a potato Wasp-103b, 1500 light years distant from Planet Earth, located around a F- type star, larger than our sun. It seems gods have transformed her into a potato in space, which would be discovered later in the far future by scientists and named Wasp-103b. Haumea is a dwarf planet in our solar system which looks like a potato, rotating around itself every four hours. Curiously, it's got eight moons and only one honeymoon. This was the Most Gracious Cow's Maget live thought broadcasting, in the name of the king, for the beloved nation.

CMB MAGNETRON

CMB, the Cosmic Microwave Background, activated itself twelve thousand million years ago in the cosmic blueprint. When the Neptunians began to be aware of what's happening in the cosmic space, they decreed it free public property, to be used by all civilizations. Investing in education and technology, they succeeded to navigate in various directions, to search for a small intimate corner that could suit their needs. After many discussions and voting sessions, they decided to settle in the lenticular galaxy NGC632, located in the Pisces Constellation.

The Neptunians established a colony on Torcular, situated at a distance of 258.12 light years from the sun. Their scientists calculated Torcular's movement away from the sun for the next 10.000 Neptunian years, reaching the conclusion that it goes 12.17 arcmin in Right Ascension and 8.00 arcmin in declination. It was concluded that Torcular is a giant star of luminosity class III, part of spectral class G8.

After carefully researching the environment, they brought archaeologists and historians to uncover Torcular's history. The team found a silver tray, the head of an anthropomorphic statue and several inscribed stones. Scientific research being ended efficiently, the door to Torcular and its cosmic surroundings of NGC 632 were opened to the industry and business, in an attempt to boost economic development. It was all that mattered for the specific humanity prospering in that dimension. Restaurants and food industry sensed the potential to multiply

their profits. They realized it's cheaper and more profitable to fly in the deep space, microwave food there and come back to serve it fresh. Surprisingly, it was much cheaper to do that, than using energy on their planet. So, they regularly flew to the Cosmic Microwave Background, to take advantage of the free of charge radiation.

For this purpose, they created Magnetron, a huge metallic building shaped like a box suspended in space, where robots were cooking food in less than ten seconds, packed it and sent it to Torcular, wherefrom it was shipped to Neptun. In less than three minutes, the Neptunian clients could eat their favourite dish, warm and freshly prepared in space. There were many types of robots engaged: the levelers, the diggers, the choppers, the packers and the shippers, each of them entrusted with different chores performed at hallucinating speed.

Soon, they were followed by medical corporations, interested to take energy free X-Rays for the hospitals, in a cosmic outsourcing project. First, they launched Operation Rinka and sent a colony of 2000 sick hamsters guarded by Rinka, a weaponized robot dog, to live on Torcular for a month. When the Neptunian medics checked on them, they were amazed to acknowledge that the hamsters grew twice their size, their fur got whiter and they had already learned how to bark. Following this successful experiment, the first Neptunian patients were put in cosmic capsules and sent to CMB NGC632 spatial GP clinic, XRayed and returned to their planet in less than 10 minutes.

The advantage consisted in the fact that they were picked up directly from their homes, as there was no need for them to show themselves at the GP's reception, to wait in line. During the flight, no nurse was assisting the patient, the capsule being equipped with cutting-edge Neptunian technology to supervise pulse, oxygen level, ocular movements and anything else deemed

necessary for the safety of the cosmic traveler.

The cosmic capsule was manipulated from Neptune, in the Health Space CMB NGC632 building. Things worked smoothly and clockwise, incidents were never reported. One day, checking the digital files in the Neptunian National Register of Patients, a young StR Specialty Registrar found out that a cosmic capsule failed to return home. He promptly informed the Board of Neptunian Superior Surgeons that cosmic capsule HS345 was never returned to the fleet base. Thus, being lost and unable to be used anymore, StR Murdehan requested a replacement. Due to the fact that a cosmic capsule was worth 1 million Neptunian dollars, SAS doctor and Chief Medical Officer Whittit advised BNSS to investigate this unusual situation. An insignificant and neglectable period of time has passed and business was going as usually, when a planetary scandal started. *Since then, the company struggled to cope with constant revelations.*

The Neptunian Health Space CMB stored data in the clouds and retrieved it whenever necessary. One day, project CryogenicHelp was launched, offering solutions to assist victims of recession. What was offered with the greatest sympathy and dedication was cheap renting cosmic space in cryogenic containers for one to five years, where poor patients of all ages could take a frozen holiday to rest, recover and get back to Neptunian active life, at the date mentioned in the agreement.

One night, the Neptunian Health Space CMB Office was attacked by young rioters who burnt all the paper files and agreements stored in their archive. At the same time, hackers

broke into their digital system stored in the clouds, planting viruses and deleting all data saved there for the last twenty years. It was a terrible tragedy and the head of the Neptunian Health Space CMB apologized online and on each TV channel for this unfortunate incident that caused the loss of data regarding two million cosmic cryogenic tourists. Nobody knew who they were, if they had relatives or not, or anything else written in their individual agreements.

In a few days, the Neptunians forgot about it, except for a young boy aged twelve, who came to enquire about his mother gone on a cryogenic holiday on Torcular for a year. The boy kept a copy of the agreement as his mother advised him, and gave it to all media outlets. The woman was a stay-at-home mother-of-one in her late thirties, and following a depression after the boy's father died in a motorcycle crash, she accepted her doctors' recommendation and went to sleep for a year in space, hoping to recover her mental health.

The media called him Cryogenic Boy and featured him on all channels, the child being a cute Mulatto who happened to be a genius in physics and aerodynamics. His mother was white, while his father was a Nethopian engineer. Zeeghol, the Cryogenic Boy, was fighting on all media channels to recover his mother, where he showed her picture dressed in an orange poncho, holding him as a baby in her arms. Impressed, corporations, rich people and common sympathizers collected the right sum of money to send him to space and bring his mother back to Neptune.

Back in time, they were all very happy together, Zeeghol and his mother crocheting together, while the father was busy inventing in the shed. The boy was sent to Torcular, wherefrom

he never returned to Neptune. During his spacewalk, he succeeded to drop down a toolbox and a five-fingered astronaut glove. On the news, they said the boy and his mother were reunited in the vast space and decided to live together on Torcular space station, where they were offered excellent living conditions, presuming they consent.

I BOOX

I Boox was floating in the canoe, trying to see to the end of the endless ocean. Old legends tell him of a realm located on the other side of the Tlanteetichil, a place where no storms ravage the settlement and where the sun is not scorching the corn crops. He was 14 years old, about to become a Chachapoya warrior, sworn to defend the vast lands of the Mayarica. This was a sacred responsibility, and awful curses were placed on the heads of the warriors and their families for nine generations, if they betrayed it. It was a cruel world I Boox lived in. He could hardly understand it, but was forced to accept it without questioning, out of loyalty. That evening, there was a ceremony where people gathered to dance and observe a rare phenomenon of falling stars. One glance too long onto the face of the young daughter of Nojoch Chak Baalam, the head of the tribe, and his destiny was sealed. Next morning, they came to arrest him and offer his heart as a sacrifice to god Uk Lukum Kaan.

– Yakunaj tuukultik ko tsiimin. Kimen, said the old priest.

– Kimen? Baaxten?

– Pool jool. Kimen.

– K'as.

– U'uik paal. Nojoch Chak Baalam said that you have one chance to live – get lost to the other side of the Tlanteetichil, bring glory to this kingdom and his daughter will be your woman to bear strong heirs for you.

– Meen maak a'alik teen u'uyeh. Teen ko'ox, Pa'atik in bin. I go then.

– Tak ka'aka'ate, hun xiipal yaah.

I Boox took his canoe, the fishing net, a sharp bone knife, a harpoon, loaded it with *sak pet*, *waaj*, *piim*, *kuxum nal* corn, fresh water to drink, and left. On the way, he caught fresh fish to eat it raw. Many days have passed till he saw something moving in the distance. It seemed to be a big black Mayan boat of the kind that was sailing from the Big Hook on the Amazon to take slaves after the monsoon season. What could he do in his small canoe to defend his insignificant life? Nothing, but to lie down, eyes closed, pretending to be dead.

The long ship got closer and strong hands grabbed him, together with his weapons, water and corn reserves. They whipped him savagely to bring him back to his senses, and ordered him to clean the boat. After many days and nights, a few storms and wild tempests, they arrived to a new land where the cold was hard to take for his naked skin. He killed somebody to steal the clothes and the shoes. They were told they have to slay anybody – man, woman or child, mercilessly, because they were an inferior, rotten race. It was a blood bath, piles of dead bodies, heads on poles, huts burning, castles invaded.

The Maya leader Ochkaan Sak crowned himself king after the priest gutted the former king alive, in a public ceremony. Nobody was spared, but the young daughter of the king and a few pretty court maidens, for the warriors. The new king was advised by gods to take the young princess as his wife, while ruling the kingdom in ruthless terror. Honouring his bravery, king Ochkaan Sak dressed I Boox in a shiny *nook kooton*, making him a noble, endowed with a large dominion and an army of mercenaries. The king needed more fierce warriors, so I Boox was ordered to head back to his country to bring more fighters and a pure blooded wife for himself.

AHPE TZUIC PALINCA AND TOPAIN KA

Shellmar woke up in his hotel room in Madrid. It was too hot outside and he had a nightmare, tossing around in his bed during an agitated sleep. A young historian venturing to understand Maya culture and civilization, he was sent to study *Tro Cortesianus Codex*, and write a doctoral dissertation on it. It was hot in the room and the air conditioned stopped functioning. Shellmar had a confusing dream about sailing in a boat ornate with severed heads, various sea-shells and scallops. He drank a cold soda from the fridge and took a shower. An international conference took place that day, where he had to submit a presentation during a workshop. His paper wasn't finished yet and he had no idea what to write next, to be able to finish it.

Consummatum est, Shellmar whispered, remembering the quote from a poem written by Marlowe, his favourite writer. He knew *suum* means *rope* in old Mayan language, though he saw no connection between the two separate words, yet his mind linked them indiscriminately. What could Mayan language have to do with Latin? So much distance between Rome and Mexico, so many differences, that it was useless to even think of a similarity. He arrived at the university, sat down in the small room where the workshop took place, opened his laptop, connected it to the board and projected the presentation.

Eleven researchers from various parts of the world were seated at their desks by an assistant. Two Koreans, a Romanian woman, a Hungarian, three Polish men, a salt and pepper

bearded Canadian, a Jew and a Punjabi were present at the workshop. The woman raised her hand to ask a question.

– Yes, please.

– I have heard the Mayans cursed their enemies or any stranger who might have the courage to peep into their knowledge and culture. Is that true?

– Never heard of this. As you can see, I am still alive, safe and sound, after four years of research into it.

– It must be a cliché with these ancient curses, added the Hungarian.

– Possibly, but you cannot deny that they were very cruel, performing human sacrifice. Don't you think? asked the woman.

– Yes, they sacrificed humans, but that was common practice among ancient pagan people. Why would the Mayans be judged more harshly? replied the Hungarian.

– No intention to judge them, said the woman, only to shed a ray of light on it. *Tak saamal*, she said, leaving the room.

– What does that mean, *taxa mal*? asked a Polish man, bewildered.

– I have no idea. Maybe we have the chance to ask her tomorrow, said Shellmar.

– To be honest, I haven't seen her before, all throughout the conference. I wonder who she is, said the Hungarian.

– A mental woman? They are generally this way, added the Canadian.

All men laughed out loud, with all their teeth, terribly amused. Today, Shellmar was lecturing about Ahpe Tzuic and Topain Ka, two Mayan hunters and gatherers, and the first ever type of corn from the Tehuacan Valley that was destined to spread around the world. Few people knew that corn, potatoes,

tomatoes and chocolate were a creation of the Southern Americas, brought to Europe by the conquistadores, together with the stories about the Peoples of the Sun. Worshipping the Feathered Snake Quetzalcoatl or Kukulcan, these people had cruel religious rituals, but quite impressive abilities to calculate time and calendars. According to the *Chilam Balam* book written in the 16th century, the corn was part of a green gem, given to humanity to feed itself. Other Mayan legends say the corn was stolen from gods by Quetzalcoatl and brought on Earth to help them survive. First of all, the maze was named „the grass of gods”, initially growing in the mysterious Cincalli Cave, the House of Corn, that was really hard to be found. Anyway, the maze was a secretive vegetable buried deep under a mountain of stone, wherefrom only the ants could take it out. They say the first people were made of the corn, not of clay, and corn was connected to the world of the gods. The Amerindians used to drink Balche, a fermented beverage, cultivate corn and hunt for meat. Their villages were led by Cacicas.

Ending his lecture, Shellmar thanked everyone for their presence and closed the workshop. He felt a strong throbbing in the right part of the head, threatening to become a major headache. Shellmar drank a few drops of water, closed the room and left home to sleep. The headache got stronger and a painkiller was really needed. The young man was afraid his chronic insomnias would turn back to haunt him.

All his life back in England, he suffered from atrocious insomnias, undefeated by sleeping pills. Barely walking, doped with tons of coffee and sugar, he felt like a ghost among living beings, though not sure the others weren't the same. It seemed to him he was part of an army of zombies pretending to be

sober and alive, stuffed with huge amounts of coffee and sugar, marching towards a common goal of global wealth and happiness.

*“Is lust in action, and, till action, lust
Is perjur’d, murd’rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust...”*

Shellmar washed his face, called a taxi and packed his suitcase for an urgent flight back to England. Entering the airport, it seemed to him that the mysterious woman dressed in black was sitting down aside, reading. Her striking blue eyes were watching him from above the unfolded newspaper.

– Are you the Dark Lady? asked her, deliriously.

– *You are deceiv’d, I am no woman, I*, she answered.

When he looked again, she was gone. The headache returned stronger, so he went to the pharmacy to buy some painkillers. Shellmar boarded the plane dizzy from the pills and fell asleep instantly, as he sat down dreaming his plane was carried by 8800 winged pigs. He also saw Richard Bronson stealing lard from his grandmother’s kitchen cellar, yelling “Startretch, you wretch!”

Next day it was reported in the news that his flight had a forceful landing due to a technical difficulty, but a witness stated she saw a strong red lightning hit the plane while taking off.

MACAR PHANTOM THUMB LA

A conceptual molecule bounced from another dimension, reaching earthly concreteness. Here it grew to be a one centimeter dwarf phantom named Macar Phantom Tom Thumb La, of the Muslin Order. More invisible and immaterial than material and visible, he liked to jump in the eyes and ears of humans without being noticed. The immediate consequence was that humans slowly lost eyesight and hearing. Subsequently, an epidemic of Immaculate Conception was recorded. Many women claimed they were embarrassed with conceiving in an unfleshly manner with unseen entities. The epidemic was called X Immac Annunc, popularly coined “Gabrielism” and was blamed on eating fast food without carefully washing teeth afterwards. Small bits of meat fried in high temperature processed oils were considered the culprits. These unfriendly particles named Alkilles penetrated the gums, entering the blood flow, carrying inimical data into the system. Due to occupational exposure, lots of waitresses dropped their cuppa of coffee on the floor, at exactly the same time. A nitrogen blanket was thrown over the situation and innumerable micro-electric fields were generated.

Heated oils in fast food were considered a delicious enemy. Obviously, polysaturated oils and alpha beta unsaturated aldehydes in heated polyunsaturated oils usually cause rapid cell death and an acute phase response. The killer molecule was identified as HNA in tri-, di- and mono acyl glycerols. Everybody protested against food inequality chanting Dag Mag Tag.

“Occupy yourselves! Go sponsor a roundabout”, replied the government. They wouldn’t listen and went to topple statues dedicated to imposing corporatists, in reality funded by themselves to be erected in their glorious memory after death. It was clear now that thermally stressed polyunsaturated oils get toxic and the MCPDs compounds in processed vegetable oils are monochloropropane diols and glycidyl esters, *process contaminants generated during the deodorisation step of edible oil refining*. And that’s it. Now we know it.

HORROR VACUI

Kenophobia Kenophobius had an anxiety like no other. The simple fact of seeing emptiness made him blabber some mismatched words and fall unconscious to the ground. It could have been an empty room, a bag with no content, a foodless fridge or a shelf with nothing to show. Everything had to be heavily loaded with various items to make him feel safe. Psychologists were called in great numbers to treat his phobia for quite a small fortune. They exposed him to more and more empty spaces till he became paralyzed. He used to lie down on the pure sandal wood bed in his personal luxurious padded cell upholstered with genuine brown horse leather, moving his head to and fro, continuously, sighing deeply. Besides a neuroses, the doctors diagnosed him with waterhammer pulses, aortic incompetence and a patent ductus arteriosus, reason why it was recommended to sleep with a set of golden pliers ordered on rinkit.com under his bed. Soon, he had to use diapers and to prevent him from being ashamed for this, all his employees started to wear diapers. To encourage him, they all wrote “true men wear diapers” on their social media accounts. They even started a public awareness campaign in the media, airing commercials with muscular men wearing sexy diapers on all channels.

His fear got so terrible that he couldn't stand to see thin women with a small waist. “Vacui, vacui”, he began to scream whenever he saw a slim woman around. He was advised to move to the countryside at a cattle farm. Soon, his state improved, enjoying to admire cows with round, heavy udders hanging to the

ground. He got fond of a particular white cow he personally named it Possession of the Moon God. Drinking its divine milk, he began to walk again and got stronger, eating exclusively natural dairy products. Advised by his broker, he established a private clinic in that remote place. At Brown Brow Bro hospital, males sick with Tannerism – defined as an unusual obsession with dark, tanned skin – were treated. First of all, they were accommodated in a cozy treehouse, where a smart ape was assisting each one, teaching them how to jump from one tree to another. After a day, they were given latanoprost eyedrops, fentanyl and momelotinib to be taken daily.

Next day, invoking Socrates, a mental state examination was performed on them to search for major psychiatric symptoms such as avoiding shopping which could be a worrying sign of anxiety and avoidance behavior. They were requested to answer relevant questions like ‘Have you ever had any thoughts or beliefs that have struck you afterwards as bizarre?’ which could definitely be a certain symptom of delusion. They were asked to say the months of the year backwards while walking forwards, to draw the face of a smiling clock, to write the name of the political leader which nobody really knew. The content of their thoughts was carefully verified to check for types of thoughts about themselves, their ownbodies, thoughts about other people and about the future, plus any suicidal ideation. Abnormal beliefs were noted such as delusions that thoughts are overheard and any atypical ideas, be it persecutory or grandiose. Finally, they were tested to see if their thoughts are expressed in the form of the flight of ideas or Knight’s move thinking pattern. If that was the case, then they had to return to the BOX ‘Psychiatric symptoms’. This box was a fake dinosaur carcass where they were supposed to sleep for a night in solitary confinement.

There were strong rules to be followed and the patients had

to obtain their own food, hunting or gathering what they could. Each evening, before sunset, they were buried in a warm lime pit, to sleep for the night. Early morning, they were washed and covered in brown chocolate flavoured with cane deshi gor, out of respect for the extinct insects. They weren't allowed to wash themselves in the river. In a fortnight, all of them were completely cured and never showed to his clinic twice. Because there were so many males ill with Tannerism, Kenophobius got rich overnight.

Kenophobius had other obsessions, for instance he only wore brown calf leather shoes bought on rubyshoesday.com. It's a fact that he only allowed pure sandal wood and mahogany furniture in his house. He was rich enough to afford anything he wanted, lest what he really needed. Actually, he wasn't aware of that, and the team of doctors and psychologists wouldn't give him a moment with himself and his thoughts, afraid he might realize what his real needs are.

One night, he took his medicine and, just like the biblical pharaoh, he had a dream about a fertile valley, where a humped bull who got pregnant in the ribs befriended a giant rooster, while Adam and Eve had a row with Quasimodo, who was trying to deceive them. There, Kenophobius was given a Peepal leaf as a sign of noble extraction and had an army of slaves at his disposal to serve him tea and cool the air around him. Most of them were young women wearing nothing else but small aprons and expensive jewellery. Green with envy, a skeleton attacked

him with a burnt clay hand-made axe. Kenophobius never woke up, totally convinced he was a lifeless parallelogram measuring 400x200 cm growing to a square sized 360 on each side, haunted by the bad demon Labartu, the Black Dog. In his perpetual dream, he was going up some stairs till he reached a room where chairs were calling him to sit down on them. There was a glass bottle with a sweetened beverage saying “Drink me”. Because he was very thirsty, perspired and tired, he drank it quickly. Then Fred Astaire appeared out of nowhere and started dancing step on the ceiling. He joined him, but fell down on his head. Curiously, nothing happened to him, at least not apparently. Next, he found himself in a slate mine, extinguishing candles with his clogs. Some invisible entity pinched him, whispering in his left ear:

– I am Nabu, the wise prophet. By Nergal, do not waste time here. Go up the stairs and find what you’re looking for.

Pushed from behind, he went up the stairs again, where he reached a room with a bed in the middle and a beautiful woman was sleeping there. It seemed to him that the woman looked like his mother. She was calling him:

– My sweet child, come to me! Your soul is empty. Let me pour love into it.

He decided to go the opposite way.

MANY WORLD INTERPRETATION MULTIVERSE MWIM

There was a strange place nobody ever visited, but it was rumoured that whenever two individuals fell in love there, the state applied the law quite seriously and unflinchingly. The government team has recently gone through a change in the software used to process each case proficiently. Nevertheless, they knew how to use the software correctly, as quickly and efficiently as possible. For that matter, feelings had to be enforced with chains of diaphanous, precious metal and crepe pinkish paper, anchored underground in the county council's basement, to make them last longer, possibly a lifetime. How long can a life last? That's entirely subjective, truly intimate and clearly proportional with the intensity of happiness experienced on average. Before marriage, they were obliged to get *going through a series of rooms and compartments*. All males had to carry a piece of luggage only and the one who was discovered with two was suspected of bigamy. The culprit was holding a bunch of slack balloons, situation which attracted the suspicion of a passing officer. He was also caught *breaking off the metal* at the railway station, reason why he was weeping while sitting at the bench during trial. *This is because we sit on the surface of it and not inside the bench, which would be impossible*, he thought to himself in loud voice.

- I am *a trinity of persons*, I need more than one piece of luggage, he ejaculated, tearfully. Where is my landscape with the chapel on the hill, near the forest? It's mine only!

Even so, he wasn't discharged. The magistrates seated in the court deck were watching him through 3D glasses released with a faulty operating guide with no pairing button, so they couldn't hear properly. They coughed all at once.

- *Luggage is already plural, luggage is considered collective*. Besides, *with a capacity for intense jealousy*

such as he has, he would really be insane if he married, his solicitor said on the bench in Lobau Bau, with his legs up.

- *It can be safely done openly,* he added. It's a protected area.

Obviously, the man was sentenced to live forever and everybody agreed the individual entirely deserved it. No one cared if the everlasting happiness was secured for every one of them, provided that they pay a tax.

After death, there was an ancient ritual that had to be followed, guaranteeing the access of the soul into the eternal life. First of all, the corpses were carefully waxed, leaving them completely hairless. Then the cadavers were thrown to the dogs to be eaten, till bones were perfectly clean. After this process, the bones were waxed again and buried into the cemetery.

During their incredibly happy lifetime, after the marital ceremony, the brides were stripped of the bridal dresses and put to work – cooking, cleaning, making children, while the men were drinking and making merry. Nobody knew why, but in the night, most of the females were sleepwalking, going up and down the stairs, followed by their husbands, closely behind. During their wedding ceremony, the state secretly contaminated all of them with the sleepwalking virus called Upstairita. A nurse holding Irma's injection was hiding behind a curtain in the ceremony hall, slightly piercing them without their knowledge, chanting inaudibly: *Maintain the cosmic balance!* Certainly, they had no memory of their usual nightly excursions, though they regularly felt muscular pain. Obviously, *injections of this sort ought not to be given so thoughtlessly.* Sometimes, their nightly sleepwalking route changed completely unintentionally, rather a small percentage of men waking up accidentally in their neighbour's bed. *The ritual was part of the annual reestablishment of the cosmic order during the New Year Festival.*

One day, a woman named Tapputi Belatekalim Eannatum broke free of her luxurious, perfumed, rosy chains and escaped into the woods, where she began digging the premises around an old, ruined fortress. How did it happen? She was quieter than usual and she has been upset recently as she overheard a number of individuals saying that she does nothing of real importance. That made her feel embarrassed and having second thoughts. Soon, she retrieved her support for the consecrated community. When she informed her husband about it, he became very angry and told her that he is going to complain about the level of service she has provided. He believed that she has not made any attempt to help him and serve him till death do them part. A number of members of the public have approached him about the issue and asked what is going to be done to address it. Frustrated, he entered the alpha state in a wave pattern of 9 to 12 cycles per second. *Occupying that space between intently focused and sleepily unaware is a creative oasis.*

That is a complete waste of time, she thought, in quiet desperation.

The woman became distressed and tried to clear them from the area. In the agitation, she took advantage and disappeared into the night. She had all her life ahead of her. However, she suspected the time was upside down and was trying to reach the past buried deeply underground. It was as if she was time travelling by cutting down into the ground in a chronological manner. The space turned into time and time into space and she was riding the hoe like a pro, singing “Dupsar, Calugal, Isibgellu, Ummanu”. Deep down, she found the famous destiny brick inscribed with the deluge myth, and several little porcelain houses. When she took the destiny brick in her hands, darkness fell. Actually, her sight was severely affected by the fungal spores and other microorganisms found on the surface of the ancient

destiny brick. She thought the end of the world had come.

Upset, she dropped the brick to the ground and went in search of sunshine and light. Walking in her own personal darkness, she arrived at Kalasasaya Teti, a sea made entirely of vinegar. There, Imdugud bird, which was created half-lion and half-vulture, was taking a bath in the pitch dark night. *Arunash, aaaa ruuuu nash*, she liked to chirp in tremolo. How did the vinegar sea come into existence? It was said that God Hatili forgot his wine skin into the sunshine. The more he drank, the more wine the skin secreted and discharged. Thus, the skin turned into a spring named Ura Dingir. A million years passed and the Euclidian space and the Newtonian time gradually came into existence. In those times of lore, Titiutti the god favoured inbred inequality and the plastic nature of humanity. At the same time, he calculated the felicific calculus in each human action. “Stand out of my sunshine” he used to say, adding that all natural rights are fictitious entities. Hearing this, Belatekalim lost her confidence and all her charms.

BIG BROTHER

Stew Art Mill was a *homo businessus* who liked to play the Big Brother game inside a mill, *for grinding rogues honest and idle men industrious*. He and other millionaires were constantly debating about the negative freedom explained as freedom from the external influence. At the same time, they were preoccupied with the right of every child to get rich.

Stew Art Mill was having a pleasant moment of intrapersonal communication, a self-to-self conversation, a genial and beautiful stream of consciousness type of experience. *The man can do what he wills, but he cannot will what he wills*. It sounds logical the other way around, more precisely *the man can will what he wills, but he cannot do what he wills*. That's more like it, add it in the book of wisdom quotes. I consider the wider impact when making decisions. Man's will is induced lawfully by the state or, ideally, by private corporations. It is a categorical imperative. Analyze how the morality becomes reality in an instant. No, reality is a historical process, according to Egelu. Well, there are four causes that make Buridan's ass an ass, and Okham's razor a razor: the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause, the final cause. I sometimes jump to conclusions too quickly. Is that so? What is the nature of being? Wait, there is a ghost in the machine! I have to chase it with the four noble Buddhist truths. Reason is the slave of passions. Fallible men are driven or governed by bad passions, by private and public reasons.

There is a hypothesis about a flying man playing with a mechanical duck, assisted by a deceiving demon. The demon's name is Legion. I challenge people who are not telling the whole truth. Well, there are two kinds of truth, a truth of reasoning and a truth of fact, which makes it a necessary truth of reasoning and a contingent truth of fact. It sounds confusing, though. You should only use the "next" button provided to progress through the process of evolution. Please select the one that is most like you. Do not use the browser's back and forward buttons or else. Suspension points. What about the property dualism and *mens sana in corpore ateism sano*? Obviously, the universe is populated with processes, not with objects.

A shift from objective description to subjective prescription was needed. Justified true belief? No, evolutionism, creationism and intelligent design, because knowledge is not about facts, but about valid explanation. Obviously, the pikes and minnows are enemies, because freedom for the pikes means death for the minnows. There is a path in the forest which nobody dared to follow, but instead stay there and die. Where is my *Philosophy in Minutes* with 200 hundred key concepts explained in an instant? You don't need weeks for this, nor Marcus. It's not easy *reconciling faith and reason*. But consciousness is a mental process and words can be used to impose power. There is supply and demand, *an absurd demand for significance*. Ulysses was searching for the meaning, sailing on a sea of meaningful meaninglessness. That is genius. Worth put it in the next book. For metacognitive awareness, the lucid principle must be used, together with the point by point explanation of the *eternal rights of men*, led by a government of kites and pigeons.

No more savanna hypothesis, no chimp link, because the savanna theory is about happiness. What about the invisible hand theory? Murdoch was wearing his wooden elliptical hat for the *Love of the Triangles*. He was called Dr. Inflammable Gas. He used a bridge of cast iron to grill barbecue for a local celebration. Steam mill madness disease erupted in Manchester and Birmingham afterwards. I encourage others to work towards goals and objectives. That is definitely right. Exciting experiments were put into action in those times. First, it was the suspended boy experiment with the lightning box, followed by the man who was chasing lightning in a vertical wooden trunk chest. He was looking for resinous electricity and vitreous electricity. The Leyden jar can was used later to give a shock to a row of 180 soldiers or 700 monks, who leaped in the air as one. King Louis XV laughed out loud. Stew fell asleep.

A CAT, A DOG AND AN ELEPHANT

Schrodinger's cat, Pavlov's dog and Gandhi's elephant met one day to discuss about white and black holes, plus a pink one for little girls. The elephant's name was Eustachio. He was one of a kind, using his trunk as a huge tubular ear. Accompanied by Schrodinger's cat and Pavlov's dog, he reached the Euclidian space and the Newtonian time somewhere between the Berlin Wall and the Chinese Wall, carefully avoiding the Babylonian Wall, this one being quite old and feeble. Because they couldn't pass, they placed three slices of salami, one cigarette and a goblet of whisky above. No surprise to see that their weight caused the Berlin Wall to fall apart. They went forward searching for the lost silence and saw a strange man. It was Eritochreat from Erithrea, who was perpetually aged two to four years old and was constantly carrying forty-five red Christmas balls, juggling them. Another man was trying to catch the stars using a lasso; he needed them to light up his basement.

Soon afterwards, they reached a place where the philosophers led by Acopernicus were pushing planet Earth aside, replacing it with the Sun, making the Pope extremely angry. The Pontiff was foaming at the mouth in Rome. While the Sun was moving closer, the Pope was hiccupping. When it reached the central position, Pope's zucchetto fell aside and he got ill with Centriloses. Since then, all the round and spherical objects were forbidden, being considered devilish things. Pope couldn't stand soccer due to the round shape of the ball, calling for it to be made square and flat in all his media appearances.

Whichever cardinal dared to say that the Earth is round, was immediately excommunicated. Nobody had the courage to admit that the planet or the soccer ball were round, for fear they could end up in jail. Aristarchus was the one chosen to prove that the Earth was round and in motion, or lose trial, freedom and life. At the same time, people had to vote if the Earth was round and moving, or flat and motionless, square like a table, rectangular as a bed or triangular like a tent.

– Be as honest and discerning as you can in your responses. Do you agree the Earth is flat? Aristarchus was asked.

– Neither agree, nor disagree.

– Can you climb on a ball?

– Only if you are a fly.

– You mean human beings are flies?

– Seen from outer space, they are invisible.

– Blasphemy!

Kep Hipler was Tycho's assistant, reason why he inherited accurate observations about the path of Mars. He was instructing Aristarchus on what to say, advising him to always utter the magic formula *no comment*. Hipler thought about an idea to make him rich, a Multiverse 2 in 1 special offer. He used X Rays, Gamma Rays and waves to surf in the galaxy and had a special method for atomic timekeeping. There were mechanical ducks, quacks and quarks in six flavours moving up, down, charm, strange, top and bottom. He called his space resort Higgsfield and relied heavily on Doppler's effect, on the lower and higher pitch frequency and on the red shifted and the blue shifted light. They say it is all about the shift in the frequency of the relationship of the observer with the observed matter. The only problem is that there are many observers and only one item to be observed. Anyway, there were time machines and space machines to be used by space tourists whenever they felt like it.

Going forward, the animals saw Empedocles took refuge on the island of Apeiron, fleeing Fathales of Miletus. There, all day long, he was mixing dirt and water in a recipient, shaking and boiling it. That was his secret formula to create a new, brave world, this one being found faulty. In the evenings, he used to play with Archimedes' claw and Archimedes' screw for some fun.

The three mammals realized that there was a great fuss about Snell's law of refracted light and Schnell's law of speeding when angry. Consequently, Albert of Saxony decreed that the velocity of a falling body was proportional to the square of the time elapsed since release, or the distance already fallen on four square meters. This is why the distance was measured in the quantity of air contained between the tip of the tower and the ground where it fell down. The respective quantity of air was measured by counting the number of the people breathing that air and how quickly they did it.

They arrived somewhere in Greece, where Plato's Cave was populated with females, while the males were flying to Mars and to the Moon in rockets. Whichever the destination, they had invisible alien mistresses there. To defend their right of choice, they sponsored the book published by Billiem Holding, titled *The Board of the Fliers*. The main idea of the book was that the prime mover, the driver of all motion in Universe is the law of attraction, advising readers to focus on describing motion without worrying about its causes. They were encouraged to navigate the whereabouts of the solar system using just a keyboard, the screen reader or the speech recognition software. At the same time, they were invited to teleport themselves using Amaterasu or Oh-My-God ultra-high-energy cosmic rays possessing between 240 – 320 exa-electron volts (EeV). There *must have been a mistake* somewhere, though.

A PHANTOM ATTACKS A WOMAN

No less frivolous in his conduct than serious in his avarice and selfishness, a man walked on a footpath in a forest. He was a member of the Blessed Legion and his name was Sacsayhuaman, a warrior specialized in preventing anyone from clawing one's way up the fence, the Iron Gate and the walls of the fortress. Because he was wearing heavy chains on his shoulders, he stopped to rest for a couple of minutes on a delightful sunny meadow. He was also carrying a scramasax, a seax dagger under his belt. His head was throbbing. While lying unconscious on the ground, *a brazen serpent* and *a brazen rat* approached him.

– Is this man dead or resting?

– I think he's sleeping. He looks as if *possessed by the demon of noon*.

– What is that?

– It is the sunstroke, *the pestilence that walketh in the noonday* caused by daemonium meridianum Acedia.

– Sounds suspicious to me. Let's bite and eat him.

So the man was consumed by a serpent and a rat.

At this time, a certain woman remained alone at the loom when the others had gone. She was reading a purple old book. A misty shadowy contour released by the pages entered her body. She lost all her teeth right there. *A most frightful phantom appeared as she sat and laid hold of the woman and began to drag her off. She screamed and wept since she saw there was no one to help, but still tried to make a courageous resistance. After*

two or three hours, the other women returned and found her lying on the ground, half dead and unable to speak. Still, she made signs with her hand, but they did not understand and she continued speechless. The phantom which had appeared to her attacked so many persons in that house that they left it and went elsewhere. In two or three months time, the woman came to the church and had the merit to recover her speech. And so she told with her own lips what she had endured. The names of individuals are not mentioned in the account as they leave immediately and they sometimes go so secretly that, so to speak, they are noticed by no one. Summoned are those who are in charge to inquire into it; but they do not always learn the names from them. Generally, they tell the names of those seen or examined personally.

Phantoms can be quite deceiving for a woman who is left alone in the loom, at any given moment. *Kai daimoniou mesembrinou, mi-ketev yashud tsohorayim.*

SOUPREME LEADER BURTOS 0.MU2.15

There was a man once in a family of one. He lived alone, working hard to keep himself happy and comfortable. But he had to wash, cook, clean and work many exhausting shifts to satisfy his small family needs. He used to say:

– Cucuriga! I am a family, prove the opposite!

Generally, nobody believed him, blaming it on the gender blurring legislation. Soupreme Leader Burtos wasn't sure about his own gender, preferring not to say it. He enjoyed to wear pinkish feathery slippers and a rosy negligee when Hoovering at home. Because he thought himself to be a rooster, even if he had no feathers, no wings, nor a cockscomb above his head, SLB bragged about his ancestor Gallus Gallus Domesticus, son of the First Red Junglefowl emigrated from Southeast Asia to Europe, thousands of years ago.

Besides pride, Soupreme Leader Burtos used to have nightmares with a hawk which was constantly chasing him. At work, he had the custom of looking around cautiously, to beware of sly hawks. Being paid good money, he invested quite a substantial part of it in psychoanalytical sessions on the couch, pecking nuts on an ivory table. There, the psychiatrist would tell him of Bleuler, Jung and Escamilla and the creation of schizophrenias.

– What's this got to do with me? asked SLB yawning.

– My dear friend, you are a schizoid. Don't worry, we can cure you.

- What’s a schizoid? Some kind of an alien?
- Something like that.

So, he was an alien after all. SLB always considered himself somehow special, in an indistinct, unprecise way. Relieved and uplifted, Soupreme Leader Burtos fell asleep on the couch, dreaming about reading Deleuze and Guattari in a thousand anti-Oedipian methods. Out of a diaphanous dreamy set, a voice told him:

– Do you know that the first use of the word *unprecise* was in 1742? It’s a trigger word. Take this train and go to Bucharest to play a game of whist. Do a finger dance under the bridge juggling three water melons, just like an insensitive clod. Test your mother’s potatoes cooked on the Franklin Stove with an inverted siphon and prepare all mews from Russia for a dream holiday abroad!

Searching in a giant *Yellow Nineties*, as big as a table, floating in front of him, Soupreme Leader found out that trigger words encourage behaviours by inducing the need to take an action like clicking links, buying, borrowing and counting money, if there’s any left.

– I am a TV set and the trigger words play me like a remote control, he said to himself.

All of a sudden, he felt so tired, as if unplugged. When he woke up, he was at the bus stop with a newspaper in his wannabe feathery hands. Robed in a Freudian slip dress, plus quite a versatile top mesh above and a pair of heavy brown boots, SLB was sitting down legs-crossed, the right leg resting on the left one. A crocodile dandy named Dorian Fingal wearing a white ruffle-fronted shirt and a Winchester 37 shotgun was eyeballing him with the greatest interest. The newspaper was about a rooster who fell in love with a disabled chick.

Deeply moved, SLB cried tears of unimaginable joy. The gentle crocodile elegantly passed the salt together with his own floppy handkerchief in an attempt *to explore the inner depths of the human body*. It was more than SLB could emotionally handle. A torrent of tears and sighs overwhelmed him, so he had to be immediately taken to the hospital. There, full of gratitude, he filled in a form, agreeing to turn his heart into donuts for orphaned kids when no longer alive. He also had silicone implanted in his balls and recorded himself reading the book *Quantum Physics for Babies* on beyou.tuber, for charity, in association with the Watopedo monastery.

The quantum woo was a new religion aiming to prove *what God, quantum mechanics and consciousness have in common*. What was it, precisely? Mainly, Soupreme LeaderBurtos was an adversary of the Weinberg-Salam theory wishing to prove it wrong. For this reason, he learned by heart entire volumes titled *Beyond Weird* and *Pay Attention: Sex, Death and Science*. SLB had some other fixations caused by *the arresting of the libido at an immature stage*. For instance, when going to work, he strived to get there in exactly two minutes and fifteen seconds, never less.

More than that, every day at exactly fifteen minutes past two, he used to stand up and utter a loud “Cucuriga, RigaCrypto” with a truly patriotic zeal. Because the colleagues felt bothered by this, he requested a separate room to practice his faith. It had pink papered walls to make Burtos feel *la vie en rose*. There, he took turns with a Tiberius Julius Abdes Pantera who considered himself to be a panther from the jungle, reason why he was eating only raw meat at work. Scientifically, Abdes was a melanistic colour variant of the Panthera Pardus leopard and the Panthera Onca jaguar. The cougar is part of the same family, being commonly known as North American Black Panther, *but no specimen of this kind was ever photographed or killed in the wild*.

Errors in its species identification were deliberately made due to the mimetic exaggeration of its size, thus details about cougar's existence were being intentionally kept out of consideration. Pantera ate his raw meat in frenzy, but when getting back home, he vomited it in the toilet, blue in the face and twisted with duodenal pain. Fresh raw meat was delivered to him each Black Friday by an anonymous dealer dressed in a grey Dovetail Workwear overalls, driving a dark forest green modern pick-up truck bought on dreamstime.com.

Even if illusionary, how could a rooster befriend a panther? They couldn't stand each other, the panther looking down on the feral dominant cockerel, disturbed by its regular talentless singing:

*All the chicks want my two-minute love
I could make it with a dove
To the "Z" to the "E"
Doodle doodle dee
A couple of minutes uppa
A cuppa of happa for buppa*

Whenever hearing this song, Pantera lost his temper and began to roar menacingly. *Fast and furious*, constrained to stick to the atrocious competition ritual and hungry for a bowl of *chicken soup for the soul*, he swallowed Soupreme Leader Burtos one morning. Nobody noticed and no feathers were left behind to prove the crime, or Soupreme's former existence. The silence was deafening ever since.

